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ABSTRACT

The third of a five module series provides teacher educators and preservice teachers with knowledge of the nondiscriminatory testing procedures mandated by P.L. 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) and of assessment issues and practices as they relate to the evaluation of minority students. An initial section offers guidelines for a presession and describes the organizational structure of the module. Three sessions, to be presented in 50 minute classes, cover the following topics: assessment (definition and purposes of assessment, the developmental history, traditional assessment techniques); P.L. 94-142 and assessment (rights of parents and students, the test communication mode, test validity, assessment personnel, test interpretation, multifactor assessment, multidisciplinary teams, independent evaluations); and assessment of minority students (early assessment, assessment of strengths and weaknesses, criterion referenced tests, psychosocial testing, observational techniques, test norming on specific minority groups, parent and teacher involvement). Sections for each class include an instructional plan, handouts/transparencies list, lecture material, references, and resources. Pre- and postassessment tests, a glossary, handouts, and transparency masters are also given. (SB)

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MODULE III

MINORITY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS: ASSESSMENT ISSUES AND PRACTICES

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MINORITY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS:
ASSESSMENT ISSUES AND PRACTICES

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P.L. 94-142 And The Minority Child

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FOREWORD

With the passage of Public Law 94-142 came the challenge to the public school system to educate handicapped children in regular classrooms, the least restrictive environment in many instances. For many teachers, the presence of handicapped children in their classes presents problems which the teachers are ill-prepared to resolve.

Martin (1974) identifies attitudes, fears, anxieties, and possible overt rejection as barriers to the placement of handicapped children in regular classrooms. Moreover, the placement of Black and other minority group handicapped children in regular classrooms presents problems stemming from the race, culture, and socioeconomic level of the students. The minority handicapped child is confronted by the teacher's lack of sensitivity to and positive valuing of cultural differences as well as his/her inability to use teaching/learning strategies and develop and/or rewrite curricula in response to the needs of minority students. In addition, the term "minority" has the connotation of being less than other groups with respect to power, status, and treatment (Chinn, 1979).

To assist teacher educators to overcome these problems and to implement P. L. 94-142, NABSE/TAC has developed this series of modules. It is anticipated that these modules will be infused in teacher education programs at historically Black institutions and, thereby, serve as vehicles to encourage and inspire preservice teachers to use their minority perspectives and expertise for the benefit of special-needs minority students in relation to P.L. 94-142.

There are five instructional modules in this series. This instructional module and others in the series address the problems faced by Black handicapped and other minority handicapped students. The spirit and letter of P.L. 94-142 are explored relative to their problems. The modules are as follows:

- *P.L. 94-142 and the Minority Child*
- *Minority Handicapped Students: Assessment Issues and Practices*
- *The Development and Delivery of Instructional Services: A Commitment to the Minority Handicapped Child*
- *Structuring the Learning Climate for Minority Handicapped Students*
- *Valuing the Diversity of Minority Handicapped Students*

The module P.L. 94-142 and the Minority Child is to be used first. Thereafter, the teacher educator may choose to use any of the remaining modules as appropriate to the needs of his/her student population.

All children have a right to equality of education. The National Alliance of Black School Educators believes that through efforts such as those of the Training Assistance Center equality of educational opportunity for all Black and other minority students can be attained.

Chinn, P. C., The exceptional minority child: issues and some answers. Exceptional Children, 1979, 45, 532-536.

Martin, E. W., Some thoughts on mainstreaming. Exceptional Children and Youth, November, 1974, 150-153.

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PRESESSION

RATIONALE

The realm of special education is no longer occupied by the special educator alone. The Education of all Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) makes everyone involved in educating handicapped students responsible for helping to determine the appropriateness of the education given. The appropriateness of education for handicapped students is often determined by educational, medical, and/or psychological assessment evaluation. On the surface, such a procedure might appear logical; however, recent controversies concerning the nature of tests, testing procedures, interpretation of test results, and minority students indicate that the apparent logic of the assessment/placement paradigm may be invalid. Future teachers need to be aware of the known pitfalls in the testing situation and need to consciously and constantly evaluate the validity and the fairness of the test data on which their decisions for educational programming of minority students will be based. Therefore, university personnel who educate public and private school personnel must help them understand the effects of assessment and evaluation on the education of handicapped students.

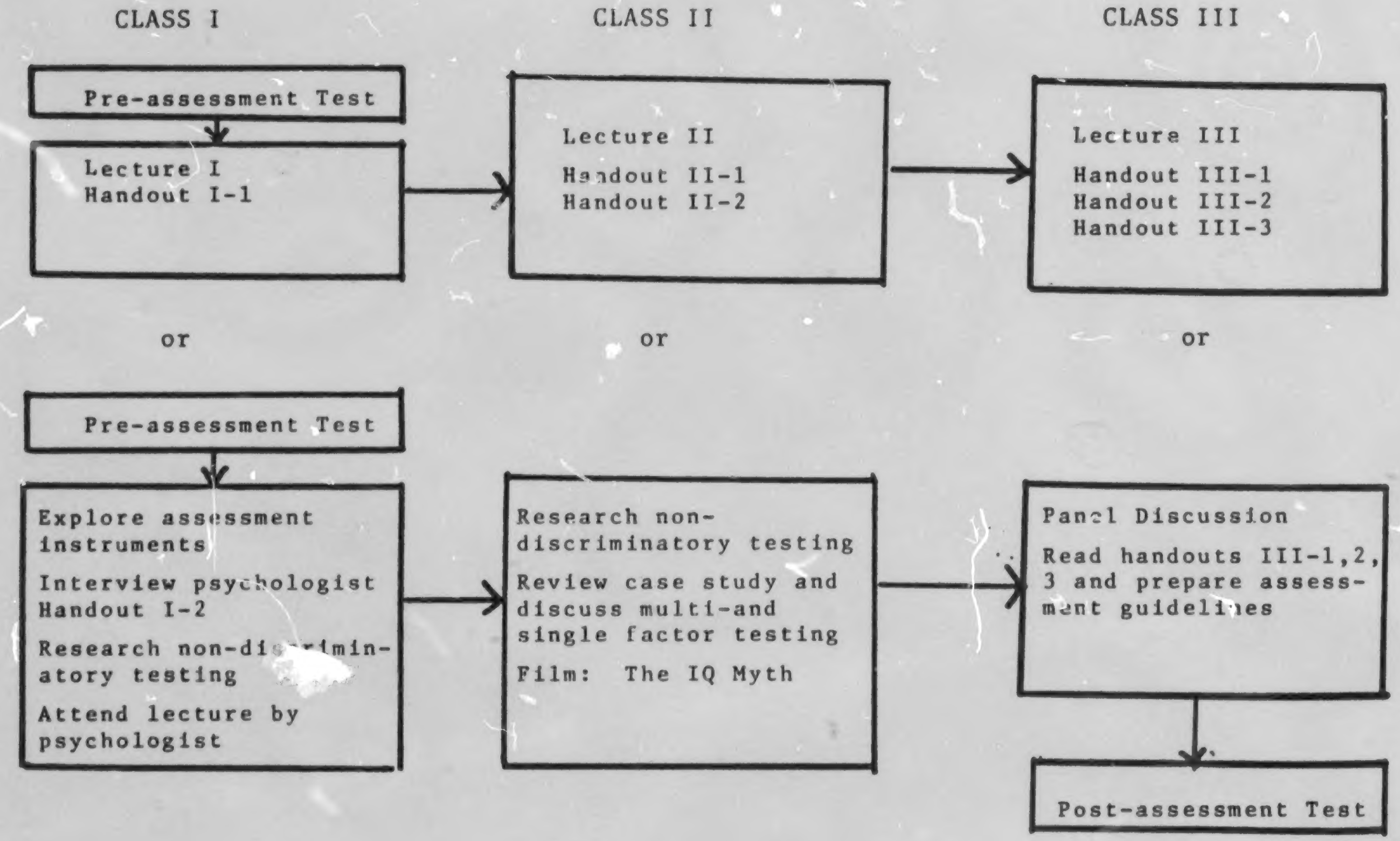
This module should be included in a course of study for prospective teachers in order that they may:

1. become familiar with a variety of assessment instruments;
2. understand some of the inadequacies of existing tests;
3. be exposed to a practical approach to the assessment of minority students with suspected handicaps.

GOAL

To provide teacher educators and preservice teachers with knowledge of the nondiscriminatory testing procedures mandated by P.L. 94-142 and of assessment issues and practices as they relate to the evaluation of minority students.

INSTRUCTIONAL FLOWCHART


CLASS I
CLASS II
CLASS III
Pre-assessment Test
Lecture I
Handout I-1
Lecture II
Handout II-1
Handout II-2
Lecture III
Handout III-1
Handout III-2
Handout III-3
or
or
or
Pre-assessment Test
Explore assessment instruments
Interview psychologist
Handout I-2
Research non-discriminatory testing
Attend lecture by psychologist
Research non-discriminatory testing
Review case study and discuss multi-and single factor testing
Film: The IQ Myth
Panel Discussion
Read handouts III-1,2, 3 and prepare assessment guidelines
Post-assessment Test

ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

This module, written for teacher education faculty, is designed to help college professors provide information and activities that will build an understanding of the assessment and evaluation procedures mandated by P.L. 94-142. The scope of this module is limited to issues in assessment with special emphasis on assessment issues related to minority students. It encourages evaluative and critical thinking about current assessment practices and highlights limitations, as well as strengths, in assessment instruments and evaluation procedures as they are applied to minority students.

University students will be allowed to examine a sample of tests used nationally and locally to place minority students in special education classes. The professor, through lecture and assigned readings, will present the inadequacies of existing tests with respect to construction, item selection, item content, income bias, and examiner bias. In addition, alternative suggestions will be offered for assessing minority students with suspected handicapping conditions.

The module is designed to require three 50-minute class sessions (150 minutes) plus out-of-class assignments. Whenever possible, alternate learning styles are taken into account by the provision of alternate learning activities and assignments.

CLASS I

Material	Equipment
Instructional Plans	
Handouts	
• (I-1) Inadequacies of Existing Tests	
• Psychologist's Interview (Optional)	
Transparencies List	Overhead Projector
• (TP-1) Assessment	
• (TP-2) Assessment Defined	
• (TP-3) Test Administration	
Pre-assessment	
Lecture I	

CLASS II

Material	Equipment
Instructional Plans	
Handouts	
• (II-1) What Public Law 94-142 Says About Assessment	
• (II-2) Consequences of Traditional Testing for Minority Students	
Transparencies List	
• (TP-4) P.L. 94-142 and Parental Consent	
• (TP-5) P.L. 94-142 and Placement	
Lecture II	

CLASS III

Material	Equipment
Instructional Plans	
Handouts	
• (III-1) Alternative Assessment Strategies in a Pluralistic Society	
• (III-2) Assessment Implications of P.L. 94-142	
• (III-3) Nondiscriminatory Assessment: Implications for Teacher Education	

Transparencies List Overhead Projector

- (TP-6) A Practical Guide

Lecture III

Post-assessment

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Identified below is copyright information on all articles that are recommended for use in this module. Some articles require a fee and others do not. The articles that do not require a fee for use are included in the module. NABSE/TAC offers this information to facilitate your securing the articles.

Handout III-1

Alliotti, N. Alternative assessment strategies in a pluralistic society, School Psychology Digest, 1977, 6, 6-12.

Publisher:

National Association of School Psychologists
2953 Silverlake Blvd.,
Cuyahaga Falls, OH 44224

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Handout III-2

Kozel, B., & Rotatori, A. Assessment implications of P.L. 94-142, Journal of Special Education, 1979, 15, 213-15.

Publisher:

Buttonwood Farms, Inc.
1950 Street Road
Suite 408
Bensalem, PA 19020

Handout III-3

Morrow, H., Nondiscriminatory assessment: implications for teacher education. Teacher education and special education, 1979, 2, 59-64

Publisher:

Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

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CLASS I

ASSESSMENT

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN - CLASS I

BEHAVIOR OBJECTIVE	ENABLING ACTIVITY		MATERIALS
	TEACHER EDUCATOR	STUDENT	
1. The student will be able to state the definition and purpose of assessment.	Lecture I		1a) Lecture I: Assessment b) Transparencies TP-1 Assessment TP-2 Assessment-Defined
2. The student will be able to state factors which should be considered in the assessment.	Lecture I		2a) Lecture I: Assessment b) Transparencies TP-3 Test administration
3. The student will be able to state orally or in writing four (4) areas in which tests and/or testing situations may be inadequate for or biased against the test-taker.	Help clarify each area of inadequacy and suggest/solicit additional areas of inadequncy or bias in tests or testing situations.	Read Handout I-1: • "Inadequacies of Existing Tests."	3) Handout I-1: • "Inadequacies of Existing Tests"
4. The student will be able to state the assumptions on which standardized tests are constructed.		Read Handout I-1: • "Inadequacies of Existing Tests."	4) Handout I-1: • "Inadequacies of Existing Tests"

OPTIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN - CLASS I

Behavioral Objective	Enabling Activity		Materials
	Teacher Educator	Student	
Objective 1	1.a-1 What do you think the instruments assess? 1.a-2 Which tests appear easy or difficult to administer?	a) Given copies of PPVT, WISC, WAIS, STANFORD-BINET, BENDER-GESTALT, ITPA (or other tests used in a particular school district), students will respond to these questions posed by teacher educator. b) Administer a test to one another. Identify why certain items are more difficult than others.	TESTS: PPVT WISC WAIS STANFORD-BINET BENDER-GESTALT ITPA
Objective 2	2a) Invite a school psychologist to speak to your class and to display and describe the instruments and procedures used to refer students into special education classes.	2b) Have students interview a psychologist.	Handout I-2

OPTIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN - CLASS I

Behavioral Objective	Enabling Activity		Materials
	Teacher Educator	Student	
Objective 3		Research non-discriminatory testing and give an oral report in class.	

HANDOUTS, TRANSPARENCIES (APPENDIX)

CLASS I

Handouts

HO I-1 Inadequacies of Existing Tests

HO I-2 Psychologist's Interview (Optional)

Transparencies

TP -1 Assessment

TP-2 Assessment - Defined

TP-3 Test Administration

NAME ______________________________ DATE ______________

PROFESSOR ______________________________

PRE-ASSESSMENT

DIRECTIONS: For each numbered item there is a lettered set of alternative answers or completions. Select the BEST ONE for each item. Circle your choice.

1. Which one of the following is NOT a provision of P.L. 94-142 that ensures nondiscriminatory testing?

   a) Tests should be selected and administered to guard against bias toward individuals with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills;
   b) Tests should be valid indicators of the specific skill area for which the tests are being used;
   c) Provision must be made for single factor assessment;
   d) Tests are to be administered by qualified individuals;
   e) Provision must be made for the use of multidisciplinary teams.

2. Which ONE of the following assessment strategies is NOT considered to be an alternative evaluation measure for use with Black and other minority group students?

   a) Criterion-referenced testing
   b) Norm-referenced testing
   c) Limit testing
   d) Psychosocial testing
   e) Norming traditional tests on minority groups

3. Which ONE of the following factors is NOT a principal consideration in the assessment of Black and other minority group handicapped children?

   a) Current life circumstances
   b) Multicultural opportunities
   c) Extrapersonal factors
   d) Interpretation of performance
   e) Developmental history

DIRECTIONS: For each numbered item, supply the correct response(s).

4. Four areas in which the construction of tests and the testing situation may be inadequate for or biased against the Black and minority group test taker are:

________________________________, ________________________________

________________________________ and ________________________________.

5. List four assessment practices that educators may employ in evaluating Black and other minority group students who are suspected of having handicaps.

a)
b)
c)
d)

6. List four assumptions on which standardized tests are based.

a)
b)
c)
d)

7. Define and discuss assessment relative to an educator's evaluation of students.

DIRECTIONS: Each item is preceded by T (true) and F (false). Circle T or F to indicate whether the statement is true (T) or false (F).

T F 8. In evaluating the capabilities of Black and other minority group children, the use of multifactor assessment is preferable to single factor assessment.

T F 9. Prior to P.L. 94-142, most Black and other minority group students who took traditional tests and were identified as handicapped attended classes with the nonhandicapped.

T F 10. The curriculum in classes for the mentally retarded is so limited that many students rapidly become educationally retarded when compared with students who remain in the regular program.

T F 11. Students, of which an overwhelming number are Black, tend to be placed permanently in classes for the mentally retarded.

ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Public Law 94-142 and recent court decisions have made professionals who are involved in the education of minority students anxious about assessment techniques and placement procedures. Many professionals are perplexed and disturbed that minority students remain overrepresented in classes for the mentally retarded while underrepresented in classes for the physically handicapped and gifted (Mercer, 1973b). Some professionals attribute this inequity to discriminatory assessment procedures and suggest that the flaws in such procedures are so widespread that formal assessment should be discontinued altogether (Oakland, 1977). Other publications have sharply criticized the use of standardized tests which form the basis for most evaluations of student progress in American education today (Fields & Jacobson, 1980).

Assessment has been called the major disaster area in education. The Council for Basic Education (Weber, 1974) has published pamphlets highly critical of present standardized testing procedures. Green (1975) points out that the use of standardized IQ, aptitude, and achievement tests has mushroomed so that it has vast political and economic implications for Blacks and the poor in the United States. Green contends that the scores minority students achieve on standardized tests greatly affect their educational careers, future employment chances, and adult lives in general. Additionally, Ebel (1975) points out that the reasons that tests are criticized and opposed are not difficult to find: the tests themselves are imperfect, sometimes even seriously flawed, used unwisely, misinterpreted, overinterpreted, and handled as weapons rather than tools.

Knowing that the aforementioned criticisms of tests and existing testing and referral practices raise legal and moral issues and seeking to comply with Public Law 94-142, educators and psychologists have responded to assessment issues in diverse ways. Many still believe that there is nothing wrong with the old way of doing things and feel that they must simply find alternative ways to avoid prosecution and loss of certain funds (Gerry, 1973). For others, the emphasis is on avoiding the misclassification of minority students; they hold that the changes required concern only the referral and assessment of special populations, the minority ethnic and racial groups. Finally, some see in these issues an opportunity to re-evaluate the total assessment process in a highly professional manner.

In order to get the necessary background information on assessment, the following topics have been selected for presentation and discussion: [Put on transparency (TP-1) from Appendix.] definition of assessment, purposes of assessment, factors considered in assessment, who should assess, and traditional assessment techniques.

Definition of Assessment

In discussing the evaluation of minority students, one of the first steps that one must take is to distinguish between assessment and testing. Assessment and testing are not synonymous. Assessment is a multifaceted process of collecting the data necessary for making educational decisions. Testing or the administration of tests is only a part of the larger process of assessment. Assessment is the process of understanding the performance of students in their current environment. Much of the assessment takes place apart from formal testing activity: parent and teacher observations may be considered a part of assessment. [Put on transparency TP-2 from Appendix.] Assessment is an evaluative, interpretative appraisal of performance, and it provides data that enable professionals to make decisions regarding the students they serve (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1978). To adequately address many of the issues in the assessment of minority students, educators must constantly remember that testing is in no way equivalent to assessment and that it is only a small part of the larger process of assessment.

Purposes of Assessment

Evaluative techniques generally allow teachers and psychologists to make decisions on the basis of information gathered during the assessment process. The decisions made may concern individual children, groups of students, or even the effectiveness of different methods of instruction. Among the many reasons for administering tests, Salvia & Ysseldyke (1978) have listed the following [Put on transparency TP-3 from Appendix.]:

1. Screening
2. Placement
3. Program Planning
4. Program Evaluation
5. Assessment of Individual Progress

Generally, the purpose of assessment is to provide parents, teachers, and other professionals with information to assist them in making decisions that will enhance students' educational development.

FACTORS CONSIDERED IN ASSESSMENT

Current Life Circumstances

A student's performance on any task must be understood in light of his or her current circumstances. Professionals must understand current circumstances to be aware of what a student brings to a task.

Health and nutritional status play important roles in a student's performance on a wide variety of tasks. Undernourished and sick students are apt to be inattentive and perhaps irritable. Student attitudes and values must contribute to our evaluation of their performance. Finally, the student's use of standard English, his or her knowledge and acceptance or societally sanctioned mores and values, and fund of general and specific cultural information all influence his or her performance on school related tasks.

Developmental History

A student's life circumstances are shaped by the events that make up his or her history of development. Harmful events, such as suffering abuse as a child or being misplaced in a class for the mentally retarded, may have profound effects on the physical and psychological development of the student. Physical limitations may restrict a student's opportunity to acquire various skills. A history of poor health may result in missed opportunities to acquire various skills. Thus, professionals must understand that it is not enough to assess a child's current level of performance; professionals must also understand what has shaped that current performance.

Extrapersonal Factors

Teacher's and diagnosticians' reactions to and interpretations of various behavior can determine whether a student will be assessed and how. For example, some teachers do not understand that a certain amount of physical aggression is typical of young children, and as a result, these teachers may refer "normally" aggressive children for assessment because the teachers have interpreted the children's aggressiveness as a symptom of some pathology. In addition, the background and training of the diagnosticians may predispose them to look for certain types of pathologies.

Interpretation of Performance

After a student's behavior has been considered in light of current life circumstances, developmental history, and extrapersonal factors that may influence performance, the information is summarized and assessed. This assessment often results in classifying or labeling the student. The assessor, after considering all things, arrives at a judgment that the student fits a particular category, that is, he or she may be judged to be mentally retarded, gifted, learning disabled, or normal (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1978).

Who Should Assess?

A nicely debated topic is the issue of who should assess the minority student with suspected learning problems. In many school districts, an educational diagnostician or school psychologist is charged with the major responsibility for evaluating all students experiencing serious academic problems within the school system. The results of the evaluation are incorporated into a diagnostic report, which usually outlines a comprehensive educational plan for remedying the student's learning problems. The recommendations are subsequently put into practice by the teacher. However, in recent years many professionals have become disillusioned with this approach to assessment, and as a result, classroom teachers have taken a more active role in appraising the skills and abilities of the student with learning problems.

Traditional Assessment Techniques

The traditional approach in the assessment of minority students emphasizes the use of formal, standardized tests. The wide availability of formal tests, the relative ease of administering them, and the use of normative data are some of the reasons why these tests were used within the school. Traditionally, a battery of tests was given to students suspected of having learning problems. The batteries included some of the following tests: Stanford-Binet, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS), Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI), Illinois Tests of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA), Peabody Picture Vocabulary Text (PPVT), and the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test.

Recently, educators, psychologists, and parents have challenged the use of solely formal tests to assess students. Questions concerning the overgeneralization of standardized test results, the low reliabilities of many formal tests, and biases of formal tests against minorities have been expressed by various professionals and concerned citizens (Dent, 1976; Green, 1974; Samuda, 1976; Mercer, 1973a, and Williams, 1972). In addition, whereas the tests provide teachers with scores, the scores do not indicate what teaching strategies to use or what specific skills the child does or does not have. Instead, the results of many tests include a general quantitative score (e.g. percentile, grade score, etc.,) which is used to compare a student with other students. Moreover, the tests do not contain information concerning specific academic skills and behaviors that are encompassed in day-to-day teaching.

Summary

Assessment is a multifaceted process of collecting data necessary for making educational decisions. It is not synonymous with testing, but assessment includes testing as one of its components.

The purpose of evaluative techniques is to allow professionals to make informed educational/placement decisions on the basis of information gathered during the assessment process. The five specific reasons for giving tests to students are as follows:

1. Screening
2. Placement
3. Program Planning
4. Program Evaluation
5. Assessment of Individual Progress

The factors that are considered in assessment are a student's behavior in light of current life circumstances, developmental history, and extrapersonal factors. This information is then summarized and the student is classified or labeled as retarded, disturbed, normal, or learning disabled.

In the past, assessment was the major responsibility of the school psychologist; however, at the present time, classroom teachers and educational diagnosticians are becoming more actively involved in the assessment process.

The exploration of some of the important facets of the assessment process will provide teachers and psychologists with some insight and data to assist them in better understanding assessment as it affects minority students. Thus, the concerns of parents and educators and the adherence to the nondiscriminatory mandate of P.L. 94-142 can be more readily addressed.

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RESOURCES - CLASS I

Teacher Educator

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Student

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Sullivan, A. R. The identification of gifted and academically talented black students: A hidden exceptionality. The Journal of Special Education, 1973, 7, 373-379.

RESOURCES

LISTS OF TESTS AND PUBLISHER ADDRESSES

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Tests (PPVT)

American Guidance Service, Inc.
Publisher's Building
Circle Pines, MN 55014

Stanford-Binet Intelligency Scale

Houghton Mifflin Company
110 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02107

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS)

Psychological Corporation
757 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Bender Visual Motor Gestalt

American Orthopsychiatric Association,
Inc.
1790 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence

Psychological Corporation
757 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities

University of Illinois Press
Urbana, IL 61801

SUGGESTED FILMS FOR OPTIONAL USE WITH MODULE

Specific Learning Disabilities: Evaluation (27 minutes, color).

Follows two learning disabled children through a series of evaluation tasks to determine their learning strengths and weaknesses, giving teachers a practical understanding of evaluative techniques. From the Specific Learning Disabilities Series, 1975. Davidson Films, 3701 Buchanan Street, San Francisco, CA 94123.

The IQ Myth:

This film is an examination of the ways in which the IQ concept has been used and misused through the years. The film focuses on the question of exactly how much importance, if any, should be placed on the result of a single test of this nature. Carousel Films, Inc., 1501 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

Nazarro, J. How can tests be unfair? A workshop in nondiscriminatory testing. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1974.

CLASS II

PUBLIC LAW 94-142 AND ASSESSMENT

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN - CLASS II

	Enabling Activity		
Behavioral Objective	Teacher Educator	Student	Materials
1) The student will be able to identify the major provisions of P.L. 94-142 that ensure nondiscriminatory testing.	• Lecture II	• Lecture II • Out-of-class reading, Handout II-1	1) Lecture II: Public Law 94-142 and Assessment. Handout II-1: What Public Law 94-142 Says About Assessment. TP-4 P.L. 94-142 and Parental Consent. TP-5 P.L. 94-142 and Placement.
2) The student will be able to contrast multifactor and single factor testing.	• Lecture II	Discuss why multifactor testing is preferable to single factor testing for minority students.	2) Lecture II: Public Law 94-142 and Assessment. Handout II-1: "What Public Law 94-142 Says About Assessment.
3) The student will be able to relate the effects of using traditional tests on minority students.	Discuss the problems encountered by minority students who take standardized tests. Indicate the consequences of test inadequacies on minority group students.	• Out-of-class reading of Handout II-2.	3) Handout II-2 • "Consequences of Traditional Testing for Minority Students."

OPTIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN - CLASS II

Behavioral Objective	Activity	Materials
Objective 1	Assign students to research the specific provisions for nondiscriminatory testing and report to the class on the provisions' relationship to assessment procedures for minority students.	
Objective 2	When given a case study, discuss the placement resulting from multifactor and single assessment.	
Objective 3	Film: The IQ Myth/Carousel Films, Inc., - 1501 Broadway New York, NY 10036	

LECTURE II

PUBLIC LAW 94-142 AND ASSESSMENT

HANDOUTS, TRANSPARENCIES (APPENDIX)

CLASS II

Handouts

HO I-1	What Public Law 94-142 Says About Assessment
HO I-2	Consequences of Traditional Testing for Minority Students

Transparencies

TP-4	P.L. 94-142 and Parental Consent
TP-5	P.L. 94-142 and Placement

The decades since 1950 have witnessed an increasing public concern for the rights of minorities, a concern that is reflected in the enactment of federal and state legislation. In connection with mechanisms for improving educational opportunities of minorities, assessment has been a major area of focus. The psychological literature of the 1960's and 1970's contains many discussions of the topic, and the impact of these discussions has ranged from confusion to clarity. A number of professionals and organizations (Williams, 1972; Green, 1974; Cardenas, 1972; Dent, 1976; NAACP Report on Minority Testing, 1976; and the Association of Black Psychologists, 1974) have pointed out that the rights of minority students and their parents have been violated. Primarily, this group speaks of biases and the misuse of the intelligence test with minority students. These experts point out the following:

1. test content does not reflect the experiences of of minority students;
2. the tests reflect the day-to-day experiences of middle and upper income children;
3. opportunities for minorities to gain experiences upon which the tests draw have been limited by poverty;
4. tests are designed by white Ph.D's from middle income families;
5. tests do not adequately predict the futures of minority students;
6. many examiners are insensitive to minority students and are poorly trained in this regard;
7. intelligence tests are poor indicators of learning capacity.

As a result of some of the aforementioned problems-and this list is not exhaustive-educators and psychologists feel that the construction and use of intelligence tests violate the moral and civil rights of minority students and their parents.

Public Law 94-142 represents a valuable piece of legislation that considers minority students' and their parents' civil rights regarding the students' assessment. Handout II-2, "What Public Law 94-142 Says About Assessment," presents excerpts from the law related to assessment. Some of the main features of the law as it pertains to the assessment and placement of minority students are as follows [Put on transparency TP-4 from Appendix.]:

1. The law guarantees that without parental consent, no school district or official can:
    A. Evaluate a student's abilities and educational needs.
    B. Determine which special education services are necessary or,
    C. Place a student in a special program.

The law mandates participation by parents in all discussions and at all decision levels affecting their child and requires that parents be fully informed of the alternatives considered, the decisions made, and the reasons for them. Parents have the right to inspect all of their child's education records, including those concerning his or her assessment and placement.

In addition, parents or guardians have the right to bring any person to any meeting concerning their child's education. This person may be a friend, a relative, a lawyer, or a community advocate.

The Rights of Parents and Students When The School Recommends and Evaluation

[Put on transparency TP-5, from Appendix.] The law requires that if school officials think a student needs to be evaluated or placed in a different educational program, they must first notify the parents explaining:

1. What actions are proposed, which tests they want to give, which experts will be involved, and what kind of placement is anticipated:
2. Why an evaluation is necessary, which existing tests, what behavior, or which records support their view;
3. What options have been considered and why certain options have been rejected;
4. Any other reasons for recommending a change in placement or program.

It should be noted it is illegal for school personnel to remove a student from the regular school program without an evaluation, without the full knowledge of the parents, and without parental consent or a final decision by a hearing officer or court.

P.L. 94-142 provides specific guidelines pertaining to the selection and administration of tests and the procedures used for the evaluation and placement of handicapped students. The mandates that provide protection in evaluation procedures address issues such as: the communication mode of the testee, test validity, qualified test administrators, multi-factor testing, and multidisciplinary evaluation teams. An overview of the major provisions addressing these areas follows.

Communication Mode

The law requires that tests be provided and administered in the native language or communication system the child uses. Individuals are to be assessed in the language system normally used by them, or in the case of very young children, the language normally used by the child's parents. For individuals who do not have their sight, hearing, or a written language, it is necessary for the evaluation to be administered in the communication system (braille, sign language, or oral communication) used normally by that individual.

The importance of providing evaluations in the communication mode used by the student being evaluated cannot be overstated. A clear and accurate measure of a child's skill level in a particular area cannot be ascertained if a child cannot clearly understand the instructions, test items and other crucial factors of language barriers.

The adequacy of the law's provisions in requiring accurate assessment of individuals with differing language systems has been questioned by some individuals. Language barriers continue to exist in the evaluation process for children who are non-English speaking, who speak English as a second language, or who speak non-standard English. These children experience difficulty with the linguistic makeup of conventional measures and often obtain scores that reflect this difficulty as it pertains to the test language and testing environment. Providing translators for non-English speaking or English as a second language (ESL) students has come to be considered a viable alternative by many educators and school systems. However, researchers feel that translation, within the context of non-English speaking and ESL students, does not provide a medium for a nondiscriminatory assessment. The alternative of translating tests into the dominant language of the child does not adjust for the differing cultural information, learning styles, and value systems of the different ethnic groups. DeAvila, (1974), clearly outlines the problem.

1) It is impossible to use a single translation in different geographic locations because there are regional differences in dialect;
2) There is an erroneous assumption that non-English speaking children speak one language exclusively;
3) Words in one language have frequencies and potencies which generally cannot be compensated for in a direct translation to a second language;
4) Literal translation of existing tests represent a complete denial of cultural diversity.

Black children who speak dialect versions of standard English encounter a different set of problems with the linguistic structure and administration of conventional tests than non-English speaking students. They experience difficulty with the language structure of test items. In addition, the attitudes of individuals who score and interpret their responses may color the evaluation of dialect speakers. It has been noted that many teachers and test personnel continue to regard children who speak Black dialects as linguistically deprived rather than linguistically different. Often, little status is given to non-standard English as a viable, rule-governed language. Moreover, the linguistically different speech of the Black child is often associated with low social status and low intelligence by teachers (Williams, 1970; Valletutti, 1971).

Tests scores for dialect speakers may reflect the child's lack of familiarity with the subtleties of standard English, the linguistic differences between the tester and the testee, and the minority child's interpretation of test questions (Harber, 1977). Because numerous tests have been found to be culturally and/or linguistically biased, researchers and educators question the legitimacy of using these tests with children who do not speak standard English primarily.

Researchers have indicated that the use of many traditional tests with dialect speakers may result in gross errors in the educational placement of these children, that is, a low score on an information or verbal ability subtest may affect greatly and detrimentally the overall IQ score (Harber, 1977; Hunt, 1975; Alder, 1973).

Alleviation of linguistic biases facing Blacks who are dialect speakers and facing non-English or English as a second language students may take several forms. Generally speaking, the construction of tests which are geared to the linguistic and cultural style of racial and ethnic groups is an alternative for the future. Although translation does not offer relief for non-English speaking students, some studies indicate that it is a viable alternative for dialect speakers (Barber et. al., 1973). [Lecture III provides a more comprehensive discussion of alternative assessment strategies for minority students.]

In addition to a provision that requires tests to be provided and administered in the native language or communication mode of the child, the law specifies that tests should be selected and administered to guard against bias against individuals with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills. Impairments that affect the modalities for communication greatly influence the type of tests that can be selected and the manner in which they are presented to individuals. Careful consideration of the handicap a child has is important to assure that the abilities of the child are being assessed and not the handicap.

Evaluations should be geared to the most intact modality the individual demonstrates or accommodations should be made for the impaired modality. For example, for a visually impaired child, the use of large print in the testing procedure may be indicated. A child with an impairment in manual skills may require adaptations such as the opportunity to give oral responses as an alternative to written responses. Thus to avoid handicap bias, evaluations must be conducted through the appropriate receptive and expressive modality for each child.

Test Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a test measures what its authors or users claim it measures. P.L. 94-142 requires that tests be valid indicators of the specific skill area for which they are being used. The validity of some tests, specifically intelligence tests, is a crucial issue with minority groups today. The argument that intelligence tests may not measure "true" intelligence, particularly when there is cultural or language unfamiliarity on the students' (testees) part, has been proposed and accepted by many educators and researchers.

If a test has been standardized on a white, middle-class population, it probably will not be valid for minority children. If a test is to be valid for all children, the standardization sample must represent children from diverse educational experiences and cultural patterns. If the test is so standardized, the more valid the results will be and the better the educational decisions made on their behalf will be (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1978).

Qualified Personnel

P. L. 94-142 requires tests to be administered by qualified individuals in conformance with the instructions provided by their producers. This provision is a medium to further ensure quality nondiscriminatory tests for exceptional students. Correct interpretation of test results requires individuals who are knowledgeable of exceptional conditions and of the relationship between a child's test score and the suspected disability. Thus, professionals with expertise in specific disability areas and trained in the administration and interpretation of tests are important in providing accurate assessments of individuals (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1978).

In addition to expertise in assessment and exceptional conditions, individuals involved in evaluating minority students must demonstrate knowledge of sociocultural differences. Individuals so informed can decrease the likelihood that a child's sociocultural background will be a deterrent to obtaining an accurate assessment. Dent (1976) proposes three areas which can enhance the educator's knowledge and understanding of sociocultural factors influencing the development of Blacks. These areas also may be applicable to other ethnic/racial minorities. He suggests training and/or retraining in the following:

1) the influence of African thought and philosophy on the development of value systems of Black Americans;
2) the differences in cultural styles and modes of emotional expression;
3) the influence of sociocultural and socioeconomic factors on the cognitive and learning styles of Black students.

Test Interpretation

The decision regarding the appropriateness of special education services for a child is the culmination of the assessment process. Thus the interpretation of the test results is a crucial factor in determining the appropriate placement for a child. The law requires that information from a variety of sources, such as teacher recommendation, the physical condition, the social or cultural background, and the adaptive behavior of the child be utilized when interpreting test results.

Many educators and psychologists feel that formal tests do not always provide sufficient information to ascertain an accurate picture of a child's abilities. However, in the past, information from other sources was seldom used to augment and complete the information obtained from formal test results. Consideration of information from a variety of sources particularly information relative to the sociocultural environment and adaptive behavior of Black and other minority group students was the exception rather than the rule in the evaluation and interpretation of assessment data. In fact, rarely did consideration of sociocultural factors and the adaptive behavior of children, particularly that of minority children, figure in the evaluation of intelligence. As a result, disproportionate numbers of minority children were misclassified and placed in classes for the mentally retarded (Alley & Foster, 1978; Samuda, 1976).

The inclusion of information pertaining to sociocultural environment, particularly adaptive behavior, may impact significantly on intelligence test scores of minority students. Research indicates (Fisher, 1977; Talley, 1979) that implementation of the two-part definition of mental retardation which includes the IQ score and an adaptive behavior measurement substantially decreases the number of minority students qualifying for special education placement in educable mentally retarded (EMR) classes. In one study (Fisher, 1977) sixty to seventy percent (60-70%) of minority group students were no longer eligible for EMR classes when adaptive behavior measurements were taken into consideration. These and other studies clearly highlight the critical need for adaptive behavior measures and sociocultural information to become a part of evaluation procedures for minority group students.

One of the final steps in the evaluation process is the review of assessment information and recommendations and the determination of the educational placement for the child. In an effort to halt discriminatory practices throughout the evaluation process, P.L. 94-142 requires that placement decisions be made by a placement committee, a group of persons, including individuals knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, and possible placement options.

Multifactor Assessment

P.L.94-142 provides for multi-faceted and multi-source assessments - assessments that attempt to examine and evaluate the total functioning of the child. The law's regulations require that:

1) evaluation measures assess educational need rather than general intelligence quotient;
2) information from sources other than tests (physical condition, sociocultural background, and adaptive behavior) be used;
3) more than one type of test be used as a criterion for placement (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1976).

The regulations against single factor and for multiple assessment instruments reflect an attempt to incorporate into the law rulings made in lawsuits pertaining to the classification of ethnic minority students as EMR. The Larry P. (1972) and Diana (1970) decisions clearly indicate that minority students were assigned to EMR classes on the basis of intelligence test scores that were used as the single or primary criterion for placement (MacMillian & Meyers, 1977).

The use of a variety of tests provides an opportunity for an in-depth and comprehensive assessment that cannot be achieved by the use of a single test score, particularly an intelligence test score. Single factor testing, particularly with minority group children, increases the probability that an accurate picture of the child's ability will not be obtained. Single test scores provide a global or generalized view of the student's ability. On the other hand, multi-faceted educational assessment can provide information on specific strengths and weaknesses of the student. This type of assessment allows the evaluator to ascertain an individual's performance level in a variety of educational areas, that is, math, reading, and oral and written communication.

For minority group students, multi-faceted assessments provide a vehicle for relief from arbitrary and rigid standards that are used to determine a student's intelligence quotient for the purpose of special education placement. With the use of multi-faceted assessment, opportunities are provided for sociocultural and adaptive behavior data to be reflected in the student's profile. Thus, the total body of information obtained from a multi-faceted educational evaluation can assist educators and parents in making more informed curricular and instructional decisions for students (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1976; MacMillan & Meyers, L977).

Multidisciplinary Teams

P.L. 94-142 requires evaluations to be performed by a multidisciplinary team that contains at least one individual with expertise in the student's suspected disability. Additionally, comprehensive evaluations require a team of professionals with expertise in different specified areas. However, rarely does a single individual possess expertise in the variety of areas required for comprehensive assessment. Thus, there is a need for a team to assess, interpret, and report on the abilities of the child. The information needed may be gathered through interviewing, behavioral observations, and formal and informal tests. The size and composition of the multidisciplinary team are usually determined by the suspected disability of the exceptional child. All members of the team should be fully qualified in their area of professional expertise (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1976).

Independent Evaluations

If parents feel that the entire diagnosis of their child's handicap is wrong or that the child has been misclassified, the law provides them with the opportunity to request an independent evaluation. Parents may have their child re-evaluated by experts outside the school system. It should be noted that the persons conducting the independent evaluations must be as qualified as the "experts" that participated in the original evaluation. For example, the parents may disagree with the original psychologist's diagnosis and thus might want to hear the view of another psychologist.

The responsibility for paying for the independent evaluation varies according to who asks for it. Generally, however, when the parents, and always when the hearing officer requests an evaluation, it is provided at public expense (Yohalem & Dinsmore, 1978).

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Student

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CLASS III

ASSESSING MINORITY STUDENTS

Behavioral Objective	Enabling Activity		Materials
	Teacher Educator	Student	
1) The student will be able to identify alternative assessment strategies for testing minority students.	• Lecture III	• Lecture III	1) • Lecture III: A Practical Guide to Assessment of Minority Students with Suspected Handicaps. • Handout III-1: Alternative Assessment Strategies in a Pluralistic Society.
2) The student will be able to compare and contrast the merits of various alternative assessment strategies recommended for minority students.	• Lecture III	• Lecture III • Handout III-1: Alternative Assessment Strategies in a Pluralistic Society. • Handout III-2: Assessment Implications of P.L. 94-142.	2) • Lecture III: A Practical Guide to the Assessment of Minority Students with Suspected Handicaps. • Handout III-2: Assessment Implications of P.L. 94-142. • Handout III-3: Nondiscriminatory Assessment Implications for Teacher Education. • Handout III-1: Alternative Assessment Strategies in a Pluralistic Society.
3) The student will be able to formulate guidelines for assessing the minority student suspected of having handicaps.	• Lecture III	• Lecture III	3) • Lecture III: A Practical Guide to the Assessment of Minority Students with Suspected Handicaps.

OPTIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN - CLASS III

Behavioral Objective	Enabling Activity		Materials
	Teacher Educator	Student	
Objectives 1 & 2	Have students present a panel discussion to the class pertaining to the merits and criticisms of various assessment strategies.		
Objective 3	Have students read Handouts III-1, III-2, and III-3 and prepare guidelines for assessing minority students based on their readings and perceptions.		

HANDOUTS, TRANSPARENCIES (APPENDIX)

CLASS III

Handouts

HO III-1	Alternative Assessment Strategies in a Pluralistic Society
HO III-2	Assessment Implications of P.L. 94-142
HO III-3	Nondiscriminatory Assessment: Implications for Teacher Education

Transparencies

TP-6	A Practical Guide

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE ASSESSMENT OF MINORITY STUDENTS WITH SUSPECTED HANDICAPS

There have been a variety of recommendations concerning the assessment of minority students. Some educators and psychologists have favored a moratorium on testing (Davis, 1971; Williams, 1970), while others have advocated avenues by which testing can become a more useful tool in the educational process. The following approach to assessing minority students is not offered as a panacea, but rather as a set of useful suggestions and facts that should assist professionals to better understand the assessment process as it relates to the minority student and to implement nondiscriminatory assessment procedures required by the law, Public Law 94-142.

Early Assessment

With the advent of Public Law 94-142 there has been an increased effort to identify children with learning problems. Educators have recognized that the earlier a child's learning difficulty is detected the more easily it can be remedied (Wallace and Kaufman, 1978). As a result, many school districts have implemented systematic efforts to effect the early identification of students with suspected learning problems.

Early identification is paramount if educators are to help prevent many problems that minority students have traditionally had to face. To avoid faulty labels, misclassifications, stigma, and low educational expectations, students who are believed to have learning problems must be carefully assessed to validate whether the students do in fact have a learning problem.

Assess Strengths and Weaknesses of the Minority Student

Traditionally, a large part of the emphasis in assessing minority students often has been placed on the evaluation of the student's deficiencies. Educators focused their concern on what the student could not do, rather than on what the student did under particular conditions (Strang, 1969). Moreover, parents and other concerned persons also were guilty of some of the same practices. Today, a more responsible approach to the assessment of the minority student must be taken, an approach which includes an account of the child's academic strengths. Then these strengths must be used in programs that will help the minority student progress in his/her educational environment. According to Lerner (1976) achieving goals in learning and acquiring a feeling of success are of prime importance to the student with learning problems. Educators must recognize the importance of success and the positive part that it plays in the building of strong self concepts in students. Rather than going into a discussion of the importance of a strong self concept and its impact on learning, simply stated assessment becomes a more positive process when a student's assets along with his deficits are measured and properly evaluated.

Assessment Must Be Ongoing

Assessment must be considered an ongoing process for continually gathering relevant information. As the student progresses, many of the initial recommendations must be modified or eliminated based upon the needs of the student. Ongoing assessment will provide professionals with evidence of successful or unsuccessful teaching and of the extent to which learning is occurring.

It should be noted that ongoing assessment includes informal tests and observations. Additionally, formal tests may also be administered to the student to provide an indication of a problem (Wallace and Larsen, 1978).

Alternatives to Consider In Assessing Minority Students

It should be evident from the readings and materials covered in this module that the techniques presently employed in the assessment of minority students do not provide the accurate information needed to develop an appropriate instructional program for the minority student. Recognizing the shortcomings of existing assessment techniques, several alternatives to traditional procedures are proposed. Among the more prominent alternatives proposed are nondiscriminatory testing, criterion referenced testing, psychosocial testing, observational techniques, traditional tests that are normed on specific minority groups, and new tests containing items and norms for specific ethnic--racial groups.

Nondiscriminatory Testing

One evident trend in the development of alternatives to traditional assessment practices for minority students is an attempt to develop tests the content of which is equally fair or unfair for all students without regard to race, ethnicity, or language. In contrast to traditional intelligence tests, culture-fair tests de-emphasize those factors believed to mitigate against the performance of minority students, specifically, speed, item content, and highly stressed verbal content (Laosa, 1977). [Put on transparency TP-6 from Appendix.] Culture--fair tests involve primarily nonverbal tasks which do not have strict time limits. Items are selected on the basis of the extent to which they sample knowledge, skills, and experience which are equally common or uncommon to all groups. Various professionals (DeAvila and Havassy, 1974; Mercer, 1973; Samuda, 1975) agree that culture--free or culture--fair tests are, at best, very difficult ton construct. [Take of transparency TP-6].

In contract to the approach of developing a culture--fair test is the culture specific movement, which advocated developing intelligence tests specifically designed for minorities. Williams (1975), because of his feeling that cultural influence cannot be divorced from the testing process, has designed a test that would capitalize on the type of information to which the average Black person has been exposed. Williams' test, the Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity, is constructed by Blacks, for Blacks, and standardized on Black groups. Because this test deals exclusively with the Black experience, the test represents a significantly different approach to traditional testing practices.

Criterion-Referenced Testing

Most test theories and practices are based upon norm-referenced testing which compares an individual's performance to the performance of his or her peers. In norm-referenced testing, learning of particular skills is important only to the extent that differential learning allows the examiner to rank individuals in order, from those who have learned many skills to those who have learned few. The emphasis is on the relative standing of students rather than on absolute mastery of content (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1978). [Put on transparency TP-6 again]. On the other hand, criterion-referenced testing interprets achievement by describing in behavioral terms the student's performance regarding a particular instructional objective. The standard or criterion is predetermined and it provides a standard against which to compare the student's achievement. It is important to note that when criterion--referenced tests are used, there is no reference to the level of performance of other members of the group (Laosa, 1977). Criterion-referenced testing focuses only on fairly precise criteria as references. Ability to tie one's shoes, to eat unassisted, to bathe, to count change, and to name common household objects represents behavior that is generally assessed by criterion-referenced measures. Mathematics, reading, and spelling are also criterion behaviors that can be assessed by criterion-referenced measures. [Take off transparency TP-6]. Knowing that a student can perform one or more of the above is more instructionally informative than knowing that he/she ranks in the fifth percentile of a norm group (Oakland & Matuszek, 1977).

Criterion-referenced testing is potentially a useful method and viable alternative to traditional testing practices for minority students. Nevertheless, criterion-referenced testing is not immune to misuse. Reliability, validity, and elimination of cultural biases are still potential problems that exist with criterion-referenced testing also (Laosa, 1973; Martinez, 1977; and Bailey & Harbin, 1980).

Psychosocial Testing

Psychosocial measures, such as the Adaptive Behavior Inventory for Children (Mercer and Lewis, 1978), have been developed to assess the child's ability to participate in social roles in the home and community. [Put on transparency TP-6 again.] In general adaptive behavior scales attempt to measure the ability of an individual to cope with the natural and social demands of the environment (Grossman, 1973).

Many educators are advocating the use of adaptive behavior scales, since their use tends to reduce the placement of minority students in special classes. However, Bailey and Harbin (1980) point out that a number of issues need to be resolved before the utility of adaptive behavior scales can be fully determined. First, there needs to be a consensus among professionals as to what comprises the adaptive behavior construct. Various adaptive scales appear to be measuring different things. Secondly, work needs to be done to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. Finally, since there is substantial disagreement in ratings by counselors, teachers, and parents, there is a need to document the reliability and validity of these instrments.

Observational Techniques

Teachers make countless observations of students' behavior during the day; however, teachers have seldom been trained in the art of systematic observation. Nonetheless, observation is essential in the assessment process and is one of the necessary skills that all classroom teachers should have.

Hilliard (1975) gives a few examples that help to clarify the need for and the application of training in observational techniques. First, he states that it is necessary to recognize that for every behavioral act there is an antecedent and a consequence. In other words, something occurred immediately prior to the event being observed and something will follow that event. For example, in the classroom, teachers are conscious of observing the specific behavior and are seldom concerned about what precipitated a behavior. Secondly, Hilliard states that one must understand that observation and description of behavior should be in small, rather than in global, terms. When teachers describe the behavior of minority children as hostile or aggressive, this can be broken down into specifics, such as "name calling" or "hitting". Hilliard identifies a final principle in the process of systematic observation, namely, avoiding the placement of value judgments or interpretations on the observed behavior. Dent (1976) points out that "hitting" is not necessarily hostile and that "loud talking" is not always boisterous or aggessive behavior. Using observational techniques instead of standardized tests is an alternative that must certainly be considered when assessing minority students.

Norming Traditional Tests on Specific Minority Groups

The most well-known approach which is based on the re-norming of traditional tests is Mercer's (1977) Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment. The pluralistic perspective requires the development of norms for each distinct sociocultural group within the ethnic group of which the individual is a member. This approach attempts to identify and empirically select the sociocultural characteristics such as urban acculturation, socioeconomic status, and family size and structure. The individual's score is interpreted in accordance with the norms developed for his own sociocultural group (Aliotti, 1977; Samuda, 1976).

Mercer's System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA) is a cultural assessment procedure designed to evaluate the test performance of Anglo, Black, and Chicano/Latino children from a sociological, medical, and pluralistic perspective. The procedure requires two major sources of information.

1) an interview with the child's principle caretaker which includes questions relative to the sociocultural environment of the child and the administration of an adaptive behavior inventory for children;
2) scores from the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children Revised (WISC-R) and the Bender-Gestalt which were obtained by utilizing a statistical formula weighted for the sociocultural factors considered. The information from the two sources is used to compute estimates for latent scholastic potential for the WISC-R (Kozel & Rotatori, 1979).

The establishment of norms on currently used standardized tests specific to particular ethnic/racial groups has been criticized on two grounds:

1) if a measure is biased in an unknown direction or degree, no procedure can be devised that will ensure a "fair" use of the test;
2) the procedure for obtaining normative data on children of minority groups "using" possible standardized measures solidifies the status quo of minority children, namely, inferences can be made that children from the particular socio-cultural group would always perform poorly in relation to the majority group and that attempts to locate these children's strong or weak areas on the test are unnecessary (Alley & Foster, 1978).

Developing New Tests

The development of new tests with content and normative data relative to specific ethnic groups has been proposed as an alternative to conventional measures. Samuda (1976) conceptualized the future content of these new tests as follows:

1) The measures should be matched to the language style and vernacular of the individual;
2) Greater emphasis should be placed on the logical nature of the child's response rather than the form;
3) An individual's performance should be perceived within his/her linguistic and sociocultural environment without comparison to the majority group.

Parent Involvement

Perhaps the most vital ingredient in the proper assessment of minority students is the parent. Although P.L. 94-142 requires parental participation at all levels, minority parent participation in the decision-making process must be improved in the future. Minority parents should be the active participants in the assessment process. They must not allow their children to be judged on the basis of intelligence tests alone. Parents must insist that such factors as the child's interest and the subjects which challenge the child be considered when planning an educational program for the child. Most of all, minority parents must be consistently and actively involved in the education of their children. If minority students are to reach their potential, the parents of these children must become advocates for their children at all levels of the educational hierarchy. Minority professionals and concerned educators must extend a helping hand to uninformed and poorly trained minority parents, if minority parents are to become effective advocates. Training in the proper questions to ask, where to go for information, and student and parent rights are but a few of the areas in which minority professionals should provide increased training and assistance in the future.

Teacher Involvement

In the past, many classroom teachers felt that the psychologist was the only professional who really knew anything or had anything important to say about the abilities of a student. Thus, the classroom teacher played a secondary role in the assessment of students. Today this process is changing due to the increased knowledge of teachers about tests and the assessment process. Moreover, because teachers work directly with students, they are in a position to effectively use assessment results and observational information in planning teaching strategies. They can bring information to the test results as well as take information from them. Therefore, they are an important part of the assessment process.

Finally, it should be noted that parents, teachers and other professionals must collectively make educational decisions about students. Collaboration between these individuals affords greater probability that the intent of P.L. 94-142, a free appropriate education, will be provided to exceptional minority students.

NAME ____________________ DATE ____________

PROFESSOR ____________________

POST-ASSESSMENT

DIRECTIONS: For each numbered item there is a lettered set of alternative answers or completions. Select the BEST ONE for each item. Circle your choice.

1. Which one of the following is NOT a provision of P.L. 94-142 that ensures nondiscriminatory testing?

    a) Tests should be selected and administered to guard against bias toward individuals with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.

    b) Tests should be valid indicators of the specific skill area for which the tests are being used.

    c) Provision must be made for single factor assessment.

    d) Tests are to be administered by qualified individuals.

    e) Provision must be made for the use of multidisciplinary teams.

2. Which ONE of the following assessment strategies is NOT considered to be an alternative evaluation measure for use with Black and other minority group students?

    a) Criterion-referenced testing
    b) Norm-referenced testing
    c) Limit testing
    d) Psychosocial testing
    e) Norming traditional tests on minority groups

3. Which ONE of the following factors is NOT a principal consideration in the assessment of Black and other minority group handicapped children?

    a) Current life circumstances
    b) Multicultural opportunities
    c) Extrapersonal factors
    d) Interpretation of performance
    e) Developmental history

DIRECTIONS: Each item is preceded by T (true) and F (false). Circle T or F to indicate whether the statement is true (T) or false (F).

T F 4. Prior to P.L. 94-142, most Black and other minority group students who took traditional tests and were identified as handicapped attended classes with the nonhandicapped

T F 5. The curriculum in classes for the mentally retarded is so limited that many students rapidly become educationally retarded relative to students who remain in the regular program.

T F 6. Students with learning problems or who test low on IQ tests, of which an overwhelming number are Black, tend to be placed permanently in classes for the mentally retarded.

DIRECTIONS: Determine if the test item or testing situations described below are biased against and/or inadequate for the Black student being tested. Write the reason you feel the situation or item is biased or inadequate.

7. John, a 10 year old living in an urban ghetto, is taking a written test. One of the items reads: "What's the thing for you to do if another boy hits you without meaning to do it? John answers: Hit him back.

The test manual gave the correct answer as walk away. John gets no credit for his answer.

8. Marcie is a first grader who lives in inner city Miami, Florida. An item on the test given to her on the first day of school asks her to circle the picture of a toboggan given pictures of a sleigh, a toboggan, and a wagon.

9. Henri, the son of a musician, is being tested by a white examiner. All during the testing session Henri drums with his pencils and taps his feet. The diagnostic report written after the test indicated that Henri is hyperactive.

10. Josie reads the directions on her computerized answer sheet: Be sure to color in each box completely. Josie colors in all the boxes on the answer sheet. Her diagnostic report states that Josie is untestable.

DIRECTIONS: Supply the correct responses to items 11 and 12.

11. List four assessment practices that educators may employ in evaluating Black and other minority group students who are suspected of having handicaps.

a)
b)
c)
d)

12. List four assumptions on which standardized tests are constructed.

a)
b)
c)
d)

DIRECTIONS: Place an X next to the anecdote(s) which describes multifactor assessment procedures.

_____ 13. Maynard is taking the California Achievement Test. He is being given instructions by his teacher and the psychologist. The teacher and the psychologist write separate evaluations of Maynard's behavior in the testing situation.

_____ 14. Bill's teacher suspects Bill needs special services. The teacher asks the school psychologist and the school principal what test should be administered to Bill. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children is suggested and used.

_____ 15. Helen is suspected of needing special services in reading. She is given the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. Helen's teacher is asked to report her observations of Helen's reading performance.

_____ 16. Mrs. Jones is a special education teacher. Her class is determined by selecting the students in the school who score below the 40th percentile on the Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children.

ESSAY

17. Define and discuss assessment relative to an educator's evaluation of students.

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APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR - that behavior that is used in referring to an individual's ability to meet standards set by society for his/her cultural group. The American Association on Mental Deficiency considers three areas of performance in assessing adaptive behavior-maturation, learning, and social adjustment.

ASSESSMENT - an evaluative, interpretative appraisal of performance that provides data to enable professionals to make decisions regarding the students they serve.

CRITERION - referenced measures - usually an informal measure designed to identify specific knowledge a child has learned and knowledge that has not been learned. The child's performance is recorded as an inventory of skills rather than compared with the performance of a norm group. Instruction is directed toward teaching the skills not yet learned.

EVALUATION is defined by P.L. 94-142 as: "procedures used...to determine whether a child is handicapped and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. The term means procedures used selectively with an individual child and does not include basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class."

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN - those children who are mentally retarded, hearing impaired, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, or have other specific learning disabilities and who because of those impairments, need special education and related services."

MANDATE - a requirement that specified tasks or steps are to be carried out, that is, federal and state laws exist which mandate that educational services be provided to all.

MENTAL RETARDATION	refers to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficiencies in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period.
NONDISCRIMINATORY TESTING	refers to the use of instruments for assessing performance of individuals which allow for the individual being tested to perform maximally on those skills or behaviors being assessed without regard to race or ethnicity.
PLURALISTIC	refers to the existence within a nation or society of groups distinctive in ethnic origin, cultural patterns, religion, or the like.
RELATED SERVICES	transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a handicapped child to benefit from special education, and includes speech pathology, and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. The term also includes school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.
SCREENING	a process which serves to locate or identify students who may need special attention. Those students identified by screening require further evaluation to determine if there is a basis for making special education decisions.
SPECIAL EDUCATION	specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child, including classroom instruction in physical education, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions.
VALIDITY	the extent to which a test measures what its authors or users claim it measures.

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INADEQUACIES OF EXISTING TESTS

The fundamental issues in the testing of minority students emanate from the persistent and undeniable fact that there exists a difference between the test scores of minorities and whites. Several studies, ranging over the past 50 years, have repeatedly demonstrated that the mean score of minorities falls one standard deviation below the mean score of whites, especially on tests which purport to measure levels of intellectual functioning (Samuda, 1976).

Most tests which have been developed often reflect the day-to-day experience to which middle and upper middle income students are exposed. The experience of many minority students is not, however, reflected in the content of the test, and, consequently, many minority students approach the testing situation with a likelihood of failing (Green, 1975). Moreover, the use of standardized tests of intelligence on minority children is an example of how professionals, in particular psychologists, have allowed practices that are morally and ethically wrong to continue (Dent, 1976).

On the other hand, some professionals contend that the main reason for the opposition to tests is that educators are reluctant to be judged and held accountable for their actions. Ebel (1975) believes that tests provide a means of auditing the accounts of educators and can report competence and incompetence. He further asserts that education is blessed with many capable teachers; however, he contends that the profession also has its share of mediocrities and false messiahs. Ebel concludes that, in general, tests used in education are valid and that little basis exits for the belief that tests are biased against minorities.

Although the testing movement enjoyed a wide degree of public acceptance prior to 1955, in recent years one finds a growing controversy and debate concerning standardized tests and especially the interpretations placed on the test scores of minorities. Today, criticism, skepticism, and disenchantment have been directed toward testing organizations.

Test Construction

Primary among the criticisms of standardized tests is that they are biased against minorities. Assumptions, item selection, item content, income bias, and examiner bias are factors that compound the cultural bias of standardized tests. Some of the criticisms of standardized tests are examined below.

Assumptions

A number of assumptions must be made by the writers of any test. In order for the scores on any given test to be valid, the assumptions must be true for the test takers. The assumptions on which standardized tests are constructed represent a definite source of bias against minority students (Dent, 1976). These assumptions are as follows:

1. All children, regardless of ethnicity, have the same set of experiences and these experiences are tapped by the questions on the test;
2. All who take the test have equal facility with the English language, that is, that each child reads, speaks, and understands the language to the same degree;

3. All children will comprehend the word usage and the context of the question in exactly the same way without regard for differential background experiences;
4. All children, regardless of economic conditions and cultural background, have the same value system.

It becomes apparent that when using standardized IQ tests to evaluate minority students, the assumptions above cannot be met.

Item Selection

During the item selection process, experts whose orientations are largely middle and upper income compose a large pool of test items. These items are then tried out on representative samples of the population. The largest segment of that sample will naturally represent the largest segment of the total society, the white middle class. Consequently, the items selected for a complete test will be those items that are most influenced by the responses of the white middle class. Therefore, minority representation in standardization samples has only a small influence on norms when the tryout samples are dominated by whites. After the items are compiled into a complete test, group norms are established by administering the test to a larger number of subjects. Thus, the norms and acceptable responses to specific items are determined by the largest segment of the sample--the white middle class (Dent, 1976).

Is it fair to evaluate minority students on items that are selected by whites whose orientation is largely middle class? Is it just to penalize students whose experiences do not conform to those of the dominant white middle class? Unfortunately for minority students, if their responses do not conform to white middle-class standards, it is assumed that their abilities are impaired, and it is presumed that they have a deficit in intellectual endowment.

Item Content

Questions reflecting the cultural experiences of minorities are seldom among the items on standardized tests. Moreover, minority students are at a severe disadvantage when they are asked to provide answers to questions describing situations that they have had no opportunity to experience. For example, students reared in the ghetto, are asked "How would you find your way out of a forest?" In addition, children from welfare families are expected to give a middle-class response to the questions, "Why is it better to pay bills by check than with cash?"

To illustrate the negative impact of cultural difference and the bias of intelligence tests against many minority children, one needs only to examine test items such as the fight item on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC). This question asks children what they would do if struck by a smaller child of the same sex. The correct answer is that it is wrong to hit the child back. Yet, in many Black communities it would be suicidal to walk away or not hit back. Furthermore, many Black children are taught to hit back as a means of survival. Yet this answer receives no credit. Thus one can see that this response and others like it do not conform to white middle-class standards. Divergent responses are erroneously interpreted as indicators of impaired intellectual functioning (Dent, 1976).

Income Bias

Intelligence tests sometimes underpredict for lower-income students. This happens because middle and upper-income Ph.D's make up the tests. These men and women often have very culturally narrow life experiences and then write tests which reflect the life style of upper-income persons. Many tests do not sample the experiences of Spanish-speaking, native American, and Black youngsters. Neither do they reflect the experiences of the poor white student in urban or rural America. In addition, poor people do not construct tests and do not have a voice in deciding what constitutes an appropriate sample of the human experience.

Chuck Stone, former director of Minority Affairs for the Educational Testing Services (ETS), says that an ETS study shows that test scores are positively correlated to income. He states that the study reveals that children from upper and middle-income families generally make higher scores on tests than children from low-income families because the tests tap specific cultural experiences of upper and middle-income children (Green, 1975).

Examiner Bias

A number of educators and psychologists have suggested that minority students evidence apprehension when tested by white examiners. They state that the presence of a white examiner brings about feelings of insecurity, self-degradation, and self-consciousness, and that these factors adversely affect test performance of minority students (Oakland and Matuszek, 1977).

Barnes (1972) supports the contention that the examiner's race has an impact on the scores of minority students. He concludes that, in general, the evidence suggests that white examiners have subtle harmful effects on the scores of minority students. Barnes bases his conclusion on studies by Forrester and Klaus (1964) and Katz (1964). In the Forrester-Klaus study, the two authors discovered that Black kindergartners achieved higher scores on an IQ test when examined by a Black examiner than when examined by a white examiner. Katz (1964) discovered that when the administrator of an intelligence test was white or when comparison with white peers was anticipated by Black students, Black subjects performed more poorly and expressed concern and anxiety over their performance.

Hilliard (1975) also feels that examiner bias is of particular importance. He contends that investigators who attempt to study other cultures must come to recognize that only through intimate contact with people of other cultures is the examiner able to understand the complexities of that culture. Hilliard further contends that many examiners often do not delve deeply enough into the culture they are observing to make informed assessment possible.

Other professionals disagree to an extent and point out that the majority of research examining the influence of the examiner's race on test performance of minority students reveals no general tendency for minority students to score higher or lower on individually administered and group tests when tested by a white or minority examiner (Shuey, 1966; Meyers, Sundstrom, & Yoshida, 1974). These educators point out that allaying children's apprehensions and motivating them to do their best, while unrelated to the examiner's race, seems more directly associated with the examiner's ability to display a warm, responsive, receptive, and firm style. Accordingly, they conclude that a policy of pairing examiners and examinees of the same racial-ethnic group seems unwarranted in most cases.

Whether only minority examiners should be used to assess minority students is a question that is still being debated in some circles; however, the key to this issue lies in good judgment. There are certainly situations in which an examiner and examinee of the same race should be paired, but this must depend upon the needs of the individual student. On the other hand, in the majority of cases it appears that allaying students' apprehensions and motivating them to do their are not related to the examiner's race, but to the manner in which rapport is established and maintained, the way in which the examiner responds to the students' attitudes and feelings, and the types of behavior the examiner reinforces. Thus, it can be concluded that the examiner's race may have only a negligible effect on the student's performance.

The inadequacies of existing tests for assessing the "real" abilities of students particularly minority students can no longer be ignored. Moreover, intelligence tests can affect the educational and social mobility of individuals because of their impact on the labeling and placement of students. Thus, the testing industry and the professional psychological community must begin to address the issue of racial and ethnic bias in test construction.

HO I-1

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PSYCHOLOGIST'S INTERVIEW

1. What tests are used for placing students in special education classes?

2. What are the strengths and limitations of instruments used?

3. What additional sources of information (besides tests) are used to place students in special education classes?

4. What tests are used to get students out of special education classes?

5. Do minority students perform as well as or less well than the majority culture children on these tests? Why is this so?

WHAT PUBLIC LAW 94-142 SAYS ABOUT ASSESSMENT
(Excerpts from the Federal Register, August 23, 1977)

In discussing assessment and Public Law 94-142 it is felt that the following excerpts from pages 42490 thru 42497 of the Federal Register of August, 1977, will be helpful to you in better understanding specifically what the law says about parent participation and evaluation. Of particular interest are the sections on parent participation, due process procedures for parents and children, and evaluation procedures.

121a.345 Parent Participation

(a) Each public agency shall take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of the handicapped child are present at each meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate, including:

  (1) Notifying parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend; and

  (2) Scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place.

(b) The notice under paragraph (a) (1) of this section must indicate the purpose, time, and location of the meeting, and who will be in attendance.

(c) If neither parent can attend, the public agency shall use other methods to insure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls.

(d) A meeting may be conducted without a parent in attendance if the public agency is unable to convince the parents that they should attend. In this case, the public agency must have a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed on time and place such as:

  (1) Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls;

  (2) Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; and

  (3) Detailed records of visits made to the parent's home or place of employment and the results of those visits.

(e) The public agency shall take whatever action is necessary to insure that the parent understands the proceedings at a meeting, including arranging for an interpreter for parents who are deaf or whose native language is other than English.

(f) The public agency shall give the parent, on request, a copy of the individualized education program.

(20 U.S.C. 1401(19): 1412 (2)(B), (4), (6); 1414 (a)(5)).

Comment: The notice in paragraph (a) could also inform parents that they may bring other people to the meeting. As indicated in paragraph (c), the procedure used to notify parents (whether oral or written or both) is left to the discretion of the agency, but the agency must keep a record of its efforts to contact parents.

DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

121a.500 Definitions of "consent", "evaluation", and "personally identifiable".

As used in this part: "Consent" means that:

(a) The parent has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, in his or her native language, or other mode of communication;

(b) The parent understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity for which his or her consent is sought, and the consent describes that activity and lists the records (if any) which will be released and to whom; and

(c) The parent understands that the granting of consent is voluntary on the part of the parent and may be revoked at any time.

"Evaluation" means procedures used in accordance with 121a. 530-121a-534 to determine whether a child is handicapped and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. The term means procedures used selectively with an individual child and does not include basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

Personally identifiable" means that information includes:

(a) The name of the child, the child's parent, or other family member;

(b) The address of the child;

(c) A personal identifier, such as the child's social security number or student number; or

(d) A list of personal characteristics or other information which would make it possible to identify the child with reasonable certainty.

(20 U.S.C. 1415, 1417 (c))

121a.501 General Responsibility of Public Agencies.

Each State educational agency shall insure that each public agency establishes and implements procedural safeguards which meet the requirements of 121a.500-121a.514. (20 U.S.C. 1415(a))

121a.502 Opportunity to Examine Records.

The parents of a handicapped child shall be afforded, in accordance with the procedures in 121a.562-121a.569 an opportunity to inspect and review all education records with respect to:

(a) The identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child; and

(b) The provision of a free appropriate public education to the child.

(20 U.S.C. 1415 (b)(1)(A))

121a.503 Independent Educational Evaluation.

(a) General. (1) The parents of a handicapped child have the right under this part to obtain an independent educational evaluation of the child, subject to paragraphs (b) through (e) of this section.

(2) Each public agency shall provide to parents, on requests, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained.

(3) For the purposes of this part:

(i) "Independent educational evaluation" means an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the public agency responsible for the education of the child in question.

(ii) "Public expense" means that the public agency either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or insures that the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to the parent, consistent with 121a.301 of Subpart C.

(b) Parent right to evaluation at public expense. A parent has the right to an independent educational evaluation at public expense if the parent disagrees with an evaluation obtained by the public agency. However, the public agency may initiate a hearing under 121a. 506 of this subpart to show that its evaluation is appropriate. If the final decision is that the evaluation is appropriate, the parent still has the right to an independent education evaluation, but not at public expense.

(c) Parent initiated evaluations. If the parent obtains an independent educational evaluation at private expense, the results of the evaluation:

(1) Must be considered by the public agency in any decision made with respect to the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child; and

(2) May be presented as evidence at a hearing under this subpart regarding that child.

Protection In Evaluation Procedures

121a.530 General

(a) Each state educational agency shall insure that each public agency establishes and implements procedures which meet the requirements of 121a.530-121a.534.

(b) Testing and evaluation materials and procedures used for the purposes of evaluation and placement of handicapped children must be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory.

(20 U.S.C. 1412(5) (C)).

121a.531 Preplacement Evaluation.

Before any action is taken with respect to the initial placement of a handicapped child in a special education program, a full and individual evaluation of the child's educational needs must be conducted in accordance with the requirements of 121a.532. (20 U.S.C. 1412 (5) (C)).

121a.532 Evaluation Procedures

State and local educational agencies shall insure at a minimum that:

(a) Tests and other evaluation materials:

(1) are provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so;

(2) have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used; and,

(3) are administered by trained personnel in conformance with the instruction provided by their producer:

(b) Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient;

(c) Tests are selected and administered so as best to ensure that when a test is administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (except where those skills are the factors which the test purports to measure);

(d) No single procedure is used as the sole criterion for determining an appropriate educational program for a child; and

(e) The evaluation is made by a multidisciplinary team or group of persons, including at least one teacher or other specialist with knowledge in the area of suspected disability.

(f) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, where appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities.

(20 U.S.C. 1412 (5) (C)).

Comment: Children who have a speech impairment as their primary handicap may not need a complete battery of assessments (e.g. psychological, physical, or adaptive behavior). However, a qualified speech-language pathologist would (1) evaluate each speech impaired child using procedures that are appropriate for the diagnosis and appraisal of speech and language disorders, and (2) where necessary, make referrals for additional assessments needed to make an appropriate placement decision.

121a.533 Placement Procedures.

(a) In interpreting evaluation data and in making placement decisions, each public agency shall:

(1) Draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior;

(2) Insure that information obtained from all of these sources is documented and carefully considered;

(3) Insure that the placement decision is made by a group of persons, including persons knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data and the placement options; and

(4) Insure that the placement decision is made in conformity with the least restrictive environment rules in 121a.550-121a.554.

(b) If a determination is made that a child is handicapped and needs special education and related services, an individualized education program must be developed for the child in accordance with 121a.340-121a.349 of Subpart C. (20 U.S.C. 1412 (C); 1414 (a) (5)).

Comment: Paragraph (a)(1) includes a list of examples of sources that may be used by a public agency in making placement decisions. The agency would not have to use all the sources in every instance. The point of the requirement is to ensure that more than one source is used in interpreting evaluation data and in making placement decisions. For example, while all of the named sources would have to be used for a child whose suspected disability is mental retardation, they would not be necessary for certain other handicapped children, such as a child who has a severe articulation disorder as his primary handicap. For such a child, the speech-language pathologist, in complying with the multisource requirement might use (1) a standardized test of articulation, and (2) observation of the child's articulation behavior in converational speech.

121a.534 Reevaluation.

Each state and local educational agency shall insure:

(a) That each handicapped child's individualized education program is reviewed in accordance with 121a.340-121a.349 of Subpart C; and

(b) That an evaluation of the child, based on procedures which meet the requirements under 121a.532 is conducted every three years or more frequently if conditions warrant or if the child's parent or teacher requests an evaluation.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRADITIONAL TESTING FOR MINORITY STUDENTS

Traditionally, the intelligence test has been used to classify and place minority children in education settings. In the past, many professionals erroneously felt that the intelligence test could measure innate fixed intelligence. Thus, it was primarily used as the sole tool to determine where minority students should be placed and how they should be classified, that is, mentally retarded, gifted, or normal. Today, many professionals, even those closely affiliated with the companies that devise and distribute standardized intelligence tests, agree for the most part that we cannot truly define, much less measure, intelligence. They feel that we can measure certain skills, but not native intelligence. Professor Robert Thorndike of Columbia University, a noted educator, has confirmed that the modern consensus represents a change from that held in the early years of the testing movement (Education for the Handicapped Law Report, 1980).

Other professionals have pointed out that tests are only tools and that there is obviously no magic way to judge a child's learning capabilities. Yet, intelligence, aptitude, and achievement tests are used in elementary schools to measure a child's learning capability. So why use tests at all (Green, 1974)?

Charges have been made that the testing industry is big business and that it seems more interested in making money and selling its product than in meeting the needs of students. Green (1974) points out that because the industry has a vested interest, it tries to convince school administrators that test results are valid indicators of learning ability and future educational success. Even Ralph Nader has gotten into the controversy by charging the Educational Testing Service with fraud. He states that standardized tests are biased against minority groups and lower income students and exclude disproportionate numbers of such students from opportunities for educational advancement (Fields & Jacobson, 1980).

Although much attention has recently been given to the issue of testing minority children, we find that the impact of traditional testing on minority students continues to be devastating and drastic at all stages in their lives. Traditional testing has resulted in the disproportionate number and the overrepresentation of minority students in special education classes (Mercer, 1973). The reasons given for the excess of minority students in special education classes and programs vary among professionals; however, many indicate that the present situation exists because widely used formal tests may be inappropriate for use with minority students (Bartel, Grill & Bryen, 1973; Grill, 1973; Sattler, 1973; Sullivan, 1973; and Meeker & Meeker, 1973).

Perrone (1976) believes that the standardized test is the culprit. He states that standardized tests have been used increasingly to make judgments about students and contends that, as a result, those students judged to be below average are not likely to have received the kinds of educational opportunities that are available to students judged average and above average.

Some effects of using traditional tests on minority students are as follows:

1. These students are usually placed in programs apart from nonhandicapped students and are isolated from the mainstream of school life;
2. There is a terrible stigma to being labelled mentally retarded. Parents report that these children were ashamed to be seen entering the "M.R." room because they were often teased by other students;
3. The curriculum in the classes for the mentally retarded is so limited that many students rapidly become educationally retarded as compared with students who remain in the regular program;
4. Students tend to be placed permanently in classes for the mentally retarded. Only one student in five is ever returned to the regular class (Beal, 1977).

While some educators and psychologists believe that the standardized test is the culprit, others vehemently deny this fact. The point is made that the score on the intelligence test is not the major factor in determining eligibility for placement of minority students in educable mentally retarded (EMR) classes and, thus, the test is not primarily responsible for the excess of minority students in special education programs and classes (Education for the Handicapped Law Report, 1980). Ebel (1975) asserts that the test is reliable and valid and does not discriminate against minorities. However, there are still others who feel that placement in remedial and special education programs is usually related to test results. Perrone (1976) concludes that students placed in special classes are viewed as failures. Moreover, students in special classes most of whom are Black and Mexican-American view themselves as failures and contribute little.

The standardized group tests of intelligence are fraught with additional problems for minority students. Samuda (1976) reveals that standardized group tests of intelligence are used to stratify students in terms of estimated potential which leads to labeling and the subsequent effect of a lowered self concept, the reinforcement of myths, the development of stereotypes, and lowered teacher expectations. Lowered teacher expectations lead to poor learning conditions and inferior performance on tests of achievement. Thus, a vicious circle is started, and the celebrated predictive validity of the IQ test is demonstrated.

Barnes (1972) states that when students receive low IQ scores, the teacher has limited expectations for the student to whom the IQ is attributed. He states that when certain things are "known" or "believed" about a student, other things, whether true or not, are implied. Thus, one can readily see the implications that traditional testing can have for minority students.

In many instances the intelligence test has been culturally biased against minority students, and the score that an individual earns by taking the test has been the crucial determinant in the placement of the minority student into special classes. This fact is substantiated and supported by the ruling and the thousands of pages of expert testimony in the Larry P. vs. Riles (1972) case, a case that involved the California State Department of Education and the San Francisco School District as defendants and six Black students as plaintiffs.

In the Larry P. vs. Riles case, students had been placed in EMR classes on the basis of intelligence test scores alone. The plaintiffs marshalled expert testimony and research reports to demonstrate that intelligence tests in general are racially and culturally biased against Black children. The court recognized the cultural bias of IQ tests currently used, the misplacement, and ensuing harm done to Black children when tested by such measures. The court held that the tests have a discriminatory impact upon Black children and that they had not been validated for placement purposes. Furthermore, the court ordered that the diagnosis of mental retardation could not rest solely on criteria that placed primary reliance on IQ test results alone.

The implications and consequences of testing remain real and pervasive in their impact on the lives of minority students. The effect of traditional testing on students who have been incorrectly classified and placed can be disastrous and may last a lifetime. A normal child may be transformed into one who is permanently retarded educationally and socially. For these reasons, educators and psychologists must continue to take extreme care in assessing the abilities of minority students (Beal, 1977).

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ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

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Public Law 94-142 reveals important implications for the assessment functions of school psychologists. Specifically, the focus is the non-discriminatory nature of "testing and evaluation materials and procedures utilized for the purpose of evaluations and placement of handicapped children." Furthermore, the law states that these evaluation materials and procedures "...will be selected and administered so as not to be racially and culturally discriminatory."

This important legislation reflects a growing awareness of the pluralistic nature of our society. Two important implications follow: (a) school psychologists will need to become increasingly aware of new testing procedures applicable in a pluralistic society, and (b) assessment procedures will be required which ensure that children demonstrate what they know rather than the extent to which they have been acculturated into the dominant, mainstream, Anglo culture.

Additionally, there will be a need to systematically develop these skills in training programs and to conduct research which will test the role of acculturation factors which may influence test performance. The most pressing needs, however, are at the practice level. In particular, there is need to improve the state of the art regarding psychological and educational testing and to develop more accurate and successful treatment planning. Many alternative assessment strategies are not included in discussions of standardized testing but rather represent the hidden agenda of testing courses. Additionally, there are evaluation procedures and tests which merit wider dissemination, particularly in the light of Public Law 94-142.

The remainder of this article addresses itself to alternative assessment strategies and evaluation procedures which may be especially useful in assessing minority group children.

Recategorization of WISC Subtests

A useful strategy for assessing cognitive functioning is the analysis of subtests within the intelligence domain. Subtests

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from Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children are particularly well suited for these purposes Bannatyne (1971), among others, has proposed a recategorization of WISC subtests based on factor analytic studies and his own clinical work learning disabled children. Bannatyne proposes the following recategorizations: Verbal-Conceptual Ability (Vocabulary + Comprehension + Similarities), Acquired information (Information + Arithmetic + Vocabulary), Visuo-Spatial Ability (Block Design + Object Assembly + Picture Completion), and Sequencing (Coding + Digit Span + Arithmetic).[1] Using this recategorization average performance represents a combined subscale score of 30 (10 + 10 + 10). Thus, the relative strengths of children can be ascertained in several areas. Moreover, such an analysis provides a much more meaningful interpretation of cognitive performance to the child, teacher, parents, and other professionals. Psychometric analyses of Verbal versus Performance Scale IQ differences and statements of percentile ranks achieved are interesting but not particularly useful to teachers. The recategorization strategy would also militate against the practice of reporting performance only in terms of Verbal, Performance, or Full Scale IQ scores. All children, and particularly minority group children, could obtain a fairer assessment of their performance if these recategorizations were reported more frequently. The Acquired Information Score, for example, is particularly sensitive to the effects of economic deprivation and poor schooling.

Limit Testing

To counteract the lack of representation of minority group children in the standardization norms of many tests the examiner might consider the technique of limit testing. Limit testing represents those variations from standardized testing which are employed after the standardized administration to increase the accuracy of an assessment. In one variation, after completing a subtest, the examiner reintroduces the subtest, provides cues, and encourages the child to complete the same test item. For example, the examiner may provide the child with strategies for solving the block designs from the WISC-R. Next, the child's performance would be carefully observed. Do cues facilitate performance? -- or do they not seem to make a difference? In another procedure the child is administered items beyond the discontinue rule (Herrans, 1973). Does the child persist on difficult items? Can he/she make accurate guesses or associations? By adapting test procedures and using parts of standardized tests examiners could develop additional alternative assessment strategies. Sattler (1974) has provided several examples of limit testing which can be employed in the assessment of children's intelligence.

Learning Potential Assessment Procedure

Budoff and his associates (Budoff & Friedman, 1964; Budoff, Meskin, & Harrison, 1971; Budoff, 1975) have formalized one type of limit testing which they call the learning potential assessment procedure. Budoff has been sensitive to the dilemma faced by many school students who carry the diagnosis of educable mental retardation (EMR) on the basis of poor school performance and/or low scholastic aptitude (IQ). Often, however, these children demonstrate behaviors which belie their low test scores and school performances. They are often described as "nine to three retardates," a description which pointedly underscores their entirely adaptive and competent behavior in nonacademic settings. Budoff has maintained many of these children can reason adequately and their poor test performances reflect differences in prior experience rather than low intelligence per se. This has been especially true of minority group children. The Learning Potential Assessment Procedure utilizes a test-train-retest paradigm. If a child is capable of benefiting from training, he is designated as competent. Thus, through repeated administrations of test problems and the opportunity to learn, adaptive behavior can be assessed. Improvement in performance following this training indicates competence and contraindicates the validity of the low IQ score. In this paradigm Budoff defines intelligence as the ability to profit from experience. Utilizing Kohs' (1923) original Block Design Test, Budoff has developed training procedures directed toward teaching the principles involved in the construction of 16 block designs. The coaching procedures stress working down to the simplest elements of the design, continual checking of the block construction against the model, and operational procedures for constructing particular design elements, e.g., a stripe.

Diagnostic-Prescriptive or Trial Teaching

Diagnostic/prescriptive or trial teaching has been a particularly instructive and valuable technique in assessment and educational planning (Rosenberg, 1968; Meyer & Hammill, 1969; Sewell & Severson, 1974; Hutson & Niles, 1973; Moyer, Note 1; Steger & Niles, Note 2; Vellutino, Steger, Moyer, Harding & Niles, Note 3.) Continuing where most assessments end, diagnostic prescriptive teaching is rather a continuum in which assessment and remediation are conceptualized as continuous rather than discrete events. For example, in order to assess a child's skills in reading (e.g., sight vocabulary, phoenic-grapheme matches, knowledge of vowels) one should directly instruct the child just above his current skill level on a new learning criterion. Examiners should determine the following: (a) rate of acquisition: How many trials are required to some set criterion of mastery?

(b) level of retention: Can the task be successfully completed after an hour, a day, or a week? (c) transfer of learning: Can the newly acquired skill be transferred to other materials? and (d) appropriateness of methods and materials to acquire reading skills: Will mnemonic coding of the learning materials be required? The results of trial learning can be easily communicated to classroom teachers and result in meaningful remediation programs, based on appropriate sequences of educational objectives.

This procedure is based on the reasonable assumption that if you want to know how to best teach a child to read or compute, have the child demonstrate some skill and subsequently teach the missing requisite skills. Vellutino and his associates have argued perusasively for this approach. They argue that educators substitute the behavioral concept of *maximum transfer* (Ferguson, 1954, 1956; Gagne, 1970) for *process dysfunction* theories of learning disabilities in remediation programs. In discussing the implications of this strategy, Vellutino and his associates suggest remediation closely approximate the skill which is the ultimate goal of remediation rather than fractionate this skill into basic sensory and intersensory processes involved in learning this skill, but not unique to it (Vellutino *et al.*, Note 1, p. 15).

To summarize, this non-discriminatory strategy would (1) focus upon performance and task variables in units that most closely approximate the skill to be learned, (2) stress direct instruction in preference to discovery methods of learning, (3) ascertain and capitalize upon competencies already possessed by the learner, (4) incorporate no assumptions as to the learner's ability to acquire a specific skill based on etiology or previous teaching, and (5) encourage the development of individualized programs (Vellutino *et al.*, Note 1, p. 20).

Task Analysis

Once a criterion for new learning has been set, task analysis can be used to assess task problems which hinder progress in remediation programs. Task analysis provides important clues about what skills should be taught next in the developmental sequence. It must explain both the "why" and the "how" of remediation and follow a logical sequence. Task analysis should result in a detailed analysis of erroneously learned rules and missing skills as well as areas of strength (Bannatyne, 1971).

For example, an examiner begins by breaking down each task into its component skills. Next, the examiner asks the child to work through the component skills beginning with the most complex skill. Thus, the examiner can determine which component skills the child can perform and which he/she cannot perform. The child's strongest component skill within the task, for example, visual memory, is exploited to help him acquire the other component skills.

Myklebust and his associates have described a task analysis strategy which reveals the modality preferences of a child (Myklebust, *et al.*, 1971, pp. 213-251). Typically, the analysis may include several tasks designed to assess inter- and intra-sensory functioning. In these procedures children may be provided with tasks which present either visual or auditory stimuli and require either a visual or an auditory response. For example, a teacher may dictate a work (auditory) and require the child to identify it from a list of similarly spelled words (visual). Thus, the critical question is the determination of whether the failure is due to inter-sensory processing, or a combination of the two.

Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment

Another promising development in non-discriminatory assessment is evidenced in the work of Jane Mercer, Mercer and her associates have developed a multi-cultural assessment procedure for evaluating the test performances of Anglo, Black and Chicano Latino children from a sociological, medical, and pluralistic perspective. Her approach has sought to identify and empirically key the socio-cultural characteristics of the individual's background which are associated with competent school performances and adaptive social behavior. Designed for children between the ages of 5 and 11, the SOMPA System (System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment) requires two principal sources of information. First, an interview with the child's principal caretaker which includes questions concerning (a) socio-cultural modalities such as urban acculturation, socio-economic status, family size, and family structure, (b) an Adaptive Behavior Inventory for Children (ABIC) which considers the child's roles in his or her family, among his peers, in school, and the like, and (c) health inventories concerning questions regarding pre- and postnatal health and related health questions. The second source of information includes scores from the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-R), the Bender-Gestalt Test for Young Children, a physical dexterity battery, and measures of height, weight, vision, and hearing. Utilizing multiple regression equations weighted for the socio-cultural modalities, this information is used to compute estimates for latent scholastic potential for WISC-R Full Scale, Verbal, and Performance IQ scores for Blacks, Anglos, and Chicano Latinos. Thus, a minority group child's estimated level of performance based on his or her sociocultural background can be compared with the national norm. Most importantly, as the number of socio-cultural characteristics is controlled from none or one to five the differences between the mean IQs of groups of Blacks and Chicanos and the Anglo group become negligible. Indeed when all five factors are controlled, the mean IQ among the Black group was 99.5 while in the Chicano group the mean IQ was 104 (Mercer, 1972).

To summarize, these assessment strategies are suggested as techniques for making testing procedures more responsive to cultural pluralism. By broadening the approach to identification of each child's learning potential, these strategies could help correct some of the abuses and discriminatory characteristics of psychological testing.

Footnote

[1] Recently based on Rugel's research 1974 and his own reassessment. Bannatyne revised his recategorization for sequencing ability and substituted arithmetic for picture arrangement.

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ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS OF P.L. 94-142

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HO III-3

NONDISCRIMINATORY ASSESSMENT
IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Henry W. Morrow

Since the late '60s and early '70s, nondiscriminatory assessment has been gradually gaining prominence as a topic of concern to educators. What is nondiscriminatory assessment? How has it become of such interest to educators? Will it have any influence on higher education?

Nondiscriminatory assessment, least biased assessment, culture-free assessment, and nonbiased assessment are all synonymous terms referring to the evaluation of minority group members, usually with a battery of psychological and educational tests. The results of these tests are then used to make decisions about an individual (i.e., is the individual handicapped, eligible for remedial programs, in need of special treatment or education?). It is the quest for answers to these questions, along with a general increase in awareness of and sensitivity to minority group needs, that has resulted in a demand for nondiscriminatory assessment. More specifically, a dictionary definition of nondiscriminatory assessment would imply a fair assessment, not favoring one side or group over another. So, then, how can we tell when a test or assessment procedure is biased?

There are several models of fairness reported in the literature: the regression model, the constant ratio model, the conditional probability model, and the equal risk model (Duffey, Salvia, Tucker, & Ysseldyke, 1976). The one model that most school systems are, or will be, familiar with is the quota model. If the quota model is used in determining test fairness, minority group students would be selected in the same proportion as that existing in the general population (Oakland & Matuszek, 1976). For example, an assessment procedure or test would be considered biased if it identified a proportion of Blacks for placement in a special education program that exceeded the proportion of Blacks existing in the general population. School systems should be familiar with the quota model of fairness because it is the criterion used by Office of Civil Rights to define placement bias. Placement of students in special education may be considered biased when there is "a higher incidence of improper placement or improper nonplacement of minority children in such classes than nonminority children" (OCR, 1972).

Sociocultural factors should be taken into account when interpreting the meaning of any child's IQ test score.

Concern over bias in testing is not a new phenomenon. Blanton (1975) cites evidence of test criticism directed toward Binet in 1910 by Treves and Saffiotti. They reported substantial differences in test scores from students of varying social status. After various statistical analyses were performed on the test scores, they concluded that test interpretation must take into account cultural and racial factors related to diverse group scores. They further advocated the development of special population norms. Mercer (1972) found that approximately 32% of the differences in IQ test scores among a sample of approximately 1,500 Black, Chicano, and Anglo elementary school children in one California school district could be accounted for by differences in the sociocultural characteristics of their families. These sociocultural factors should be taken into account when interpreting the meaning of any child's IQ test score.

Even though the professional literature is replete with articles citing concern over test bias

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and the effects of sociocultural factors on scores, it took the passage of federal legislation and subsequent court rulings on compliance failure by state education agencies to make the impact of nondiscriminatory assessment felt in public schools. The Education for all the Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 established that public schools must engage in specified activities to insure that handicapped children receive certain guaranteed rights. These pieces of legislation specify, among other things, that nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures be implemented, that an individualized education program be developed for each child, that each child be placed in the least restrictive educational environment deemed appropriate for his needs, and that certain procedural safeguards be used to assure due process and parental involvement in determining the child's educational program. It is primarily on these major points that class action suits are filed against public schools and state education agencies for failure to provide appropriate educational programs for the handicapped.

In response to this legislation, state education agencies are supposed to revise their special education policies and procedures to comply with the requirements of the law. Indeed, one would expect that after specific state policies and procedures were revised and state plans were approved by the federal government, nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures would be in place and implemented by public schools. But this is not the case. The courts are getting more and more involved in public education, in the issues of nondiscriminatory testing practices in schools (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954; Hobson v. Hansen, 1967; Arreola v. Santa Ana Board of Education, 1968; Spangler v. Pasadena Board of Education, 1970; Diana v. California State Board of Education, 1970). Probably the most monumental case to date is Larry P. v. Riles (1972). In this case, the plaintiffs sought and received an injunction against the use of intelligence tests in California, pending the final outcome. The plaintiffs have argued that racial bias in intelligence tests has resulted in overrepresentation of minority students in classes for the mentally retarded. Why is it that the courts are more active in hearing these types of cases? Isn't the legislative mandate clear? Aren't the states modifying their evaluation guidelines? Perhaps there is difficulty in implementing nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures. Indeed, the law does not specify what constitute specific nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures. But the Office of Civil Rights has definitely established the evaluation criterion for determining the existence of such procedures (the quota model).

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS: WHERE IS DISCRIMINATION OCCURRING?

Since OCR determines lack of nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures by the end result of an appraisal process (number of minority group children placed in special education classes), discriminatory practices could be occurring in any of the steps preceding special education enrollment. Major steps in an appraisal process are screening and referral, comprehensive assessment, committee review of all assessment data, determination of eligibility for special education, and then placement in special, remedial, or regular education. The issue of nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures currently focuses upon the comprehensive assessment step and then only on one aspect of that step—assessment for the purpose of determining the presence or absence of a handicap. It is in this step that numerous court cases have attacked intelligence tests used in assessing minority group children to determine presence/absence of mental retardation. At first glance it would seem that an easy solution to the problem of providing nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures would be to eliminate the use of intelligence tests or perhaps to develop a culture-fair intelligence test.

But the problem is massively more complex, when considering that a culture-fair test may never be developed (Tucker, 1976); that the majority of minority group students currently designated mentally retarded may, in fact, be "six-hour retardates" (Mercer, 1973); that, regardless of how sophisticated data collection procedures become, placement committees may actually ignore the data when making the final decision to place a student into special education (Morrow, Powell, & Ely, 1976). This last point deserves further discussion, since the focus of court suits about nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures

Placement committees may actually ignore the data when making the final decision to place a student into special education.

has been on intelligence tests per se. There is little information available in the professional literature about how decisions are reached regarding all appraisal data gathered before the placement committee. Morrow, Powell, & Ely (1976) wanted to investigate the effects of varying types of information (psychologist's report versus psychologist's report plus social history information) made available to placement committees upon the committees' decisions about students' eligibility for placement in special education. Ten placement committees were given information on 12 referred pupils, half of which had only the psychologist's report on tests results, while the other half had both psychologist's report and social history information. In addition, six referred pupils had been recommended for special education, and six had been recommended for return to regular education by an outside psychologist. The 10 placement committees were not given information on the placement recommendations made by the outside psychologists. Analysis of the committees' decisions showed no significant relationship either between the psychologist's placement recommendations or the presence of social history information. In other words, the committees' placement decisions varied randomly to the outside psychologist's recommendations and the presence of social history information. These preliminary data confirm the assertions posed by Duffey et al. (1978) and Tucker (1976) that we do not need a moratorium on use of intelligence tests to achieve nondiscriminatory evaluation practices. What we do need is closer scrutiny of the decision-making. Both authors emphasize that the most nonbiased assessment process can be rendered ineffective by decisions made in placement committee meeting. According to Tucker (1976):

> Only when the placement category carries a cultural or social stigma, however, do the problems associated with biased placement emerge. The categories of "mental retardation," "emotional disturbance," "learning disabilities," and to some extent "minimal brain dysfunction" give rise to the greatest problems in biased placement and hence, in biased assessment. These categories —often referred to as "mildly handicapping conditions" — are problems because they are based on social norms or ill-defined symptoms which appear as easily because of normal culture diversity as because of some handicapping condition. It is sometimes impossible to tell the difference. (p. 45)

Once again the echo of Treves' and Saffiotti's plea in 1910 to specifically account for racial and cultural factors in test interpretation is heard and reverberates throughout the courts. Sociocultural factors must be equally accounted for in comprehensive assessment and in placement committee decision making. Are our appraisal procedures and tests technically sophisticated enough to account for sociocultural factors?

ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR: A NEW CULTURE-FAIR TEST?

What is adaptive behavior and how did it get associated with nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures? Adaptive behavior was initially associated with the field of mental retardation as emphasized by the current definition, "Mental retardation refers to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior, and manifested during the developmental period" (Grossman, 1973). Primarily through the work of Mercer (1973, in press; Mercer & Lewis, 1977, 1978), the measurement of adaptive behavior in public schools became associated with nondiscriminatory assessment. In this context it is related to data collection on a student's out-of-school behaviors or social roles. This point is a departure from adaptive behavior measurement in the field of mental retardation, as best reflected in the works of Leland (1968, 1972, 1978), who emphasizes data collection leading directly to educational programming for the retarded. These authors represent different theoretical and measurement viewpoints on adaptive behavior while using the same term (Coulter & Morrow, 1978). There is still confusion about adaptive behavior measurement and the theoretical differences cited above (Morrow, Coulter, & Coulter, 1978).

Depending on how adaptive behavior is assessed, pilot test data (Fisher, 1977; Talley, 1979) indicate that full implementation of the two-part definition of mental retardation results in large percentages (60 to 70% in one study) of minority group students no longer qualifying for placement in special education as mentally retarded. Fisher (1977) referred 126 students for adaptive behavior assessment only after meeting the following criteria: (1) scores on an individual test of intelligence had to show no significant scatter in subtest profiles and to be at least two standard deviations below the mean for an educable mentally retarded classification and at least three standard deviations below the mean for a trainable mentally retarded classification; (2) scores had to be within the mentally retarded range on the Wide Range Achievement Test and the Bender Gestalt Visual Motor Test. Upon meeting these criteria, a student's adaptive behavior was assessed using either the *Adaptive Behavior Inventory for Children, Adaptive Behavior Scale – Public School Version,* or *Vineland Social Maturity Scale* (supplemented by the *Pre-School Attainment Record* for those below age 5). For those students who would have qualified for special education as trainable mentally retarded (TMR) prior to adaptive behavior assessment, 97.5% remained qualified in the TMR classification. For those students who would have qualified as educable mentally retarded (EMR) prior to adaptive behavior assessment, 66.7% *no longer* met eligibility criteria. Of those students deemed no longer eligible for special education services as mentally retarded, 80% were minority group students of low socioeconomic status.

Talley (1979) reports that adaptive behavior measurement through the adoption of Mercer's system of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA) has helped the public school system in Pueblo, Colorado, to meet an Office of Civil Rights mandate to correct for ethnic disproportions in its special education programs. Thus, technically there are procedures and techniques available to allow for more systematic accounting of socioculture factors on test scores.

However, as cautioned by Newland (1973):

> The psychologist himself (herself) is the crucial variable. It is he (she) who decides what test to use, who should know its appropriateness to the situation at hand, and who is obligated to help the user of the information he produces in a psychoeducationally sound manner. A test just lays on a shelf; it is a person who decides whether it is relevant to the task at hand. Disturbingly often, attempts have been made to measure engine compression by means of a tire pressue gauge. (p. 322)

Professional judgment continues to be the mainstay in the appraisal process.

Yet there are no techniques available for assuring that a nonbiased placement decision is reached after reviewing all assessment data. Professional judgment continues to be the mainstay in this step of the appraisal process.

IMPACT IN THE SCHOOLS

Very few state departments or public schools are fully aware of the potential impact of implementing nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures. Consider the effect of implementing the two-part definition of mental retardation. If pilot test data hold up, states with disproportionate numbers of minority group students in mentally retarded classes may see 60% or more of those students no longer eligible for special education as mentally retarded! The responsibility for educating these students will fall upon regular educators. The assessment process in public schools will become more comprehensive and, in order to avoid taking a longer time, greater reliance will have to be placed upon multidisciplinary teams to assess each child. Indeed some states have shifted the responsibility for screening school populations for high-risk students to regular education — a procedure usually associated with the functions of special education. The term "ecological assessment" of a child is being used more frequently in the professional literature. According to Wallace and Larsen (1978), such assessment is:

> Typified by the direct examination of the child and the various environments in which the child operates. More specifically, the professional who conducts an ecological assessment attempts to view the child and his or her environment (e.g.,

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Wallace, G., & Larsen, S. C. *Educational assessment of learning problems.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1978.

Henry W. Morrow, Associate Director, Texas Regional Resource Center, Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas.

> the classroom, home, etc.) in its totality rather than as discrete and separately functioning entities. (p. 99)

As such, the need for a teacher's ability to assess students in the classroom is obviously heightened, particularly as it relates to the curriculum being presented to the student. How many teachers are currently able to diagnose a student's difficulties in reading by controlling for such things as variability of reading and drill activity? How many educators are familiar with the requirements of implementing nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures, following due process procedures, implementing mainstreaming handicapped students, or placing handicapped students in least restrictive environments? Regular educators are becoming more immersed in the total appraisal process, with the obvious need for additional training and information about pupil appraisal in general. To reiterate a previous point, only by relying upon sound professional judgment in both comprehensive assessment and decision making can nondiscriminatory evaluation procedures be realized.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Many of the training and information-sharing needs in public schools reflect directly on higher education. How many training institutions are presenting information on current legislative, legal, and technical changes affecting public schools? How many courses in special education are undergraduates required to take? Are they being trained to assist in mainstreaming handicapped students? How many graduating teachers will be able to manage multiple curricula in one classroom (shades of the old one-room schoolhouse)? How many courses in behavior management and remedial reading are required? Behavior and reading problems continue to be the most frequently mentioned problems confronting teachers. Is the concept of ecological assessment being presented to prospective teachers?

The concepts of mainstreaming, individualized instruction, and ecological assessment are predicated not only upon available technical skills of teachers, but upon flexibility toward a variety of student types. In a simulation exercise developed by Helton, Morrow, and Yates (1977) for a seminar on instructional grouping with a group of special educators, data were collected to reveal what criteria participants would use to group students. Participants were to review six cases (deaf, slow learner, normal, educable mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, and learning disabled), and then select three students they would group for reading instruction using criteria such as age, sex, reading difficulties, or instructional methodology needed. They were also requested to identify their choice of a particular instructional methodology and materials they would use with the three selected students. The results showed no clear preference for selecting one type of handicapped youngster over another. No preference emerged regarding instructional methods and materials. The implications were toward providing greater flexibility to teachers in allowing them to select students, teaching techniques, and instructional materials. In order for teachers to become flexible—which is perhaps a necessity in mainstreaming and individualizing instruction for those children who are no longer qualified for special education services but who definitely need some type of special assistance—higher education must prepare creative, flexible school administrators.

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ASSESSMENT

1. DEFINITION OF ASSESSMENT
2. PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT
3. FACTORS CONSIDERED IN ASSESSMENT
4. WHO SHOULD ASSESS?
5. TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

ASSESSMENT - DEFINED

ASSESSMENT IS AN EVALUATIVE, INTERPRETATIVE APPRAISAL OF PERFORMANCE AND IT PROVIDES DATA THAT ENABLE PROFESSIONALS TO MAKE DECISIONS REGARDING THE STUDENTS THEY SERVE.

TEST ADMINISTRATION

1. SCREENING
2. PLACEMENT
3. PROGRAM PLANNING
4. PROGRAM EVALUATION
5. ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS

P.L. 94-142 AND PARENTAL CONSENT

THE LAW GUARANTEES THAT WITHOUT PARENTAL CONSENT (OR A DUE PROCESS DECISION) NO SCHOOL DISTRICT OR OFFICIAL CAN:

A. EVALUATE A STUDENT'S ABILITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

B. DETERMINE WHICH SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES ARE NECESSARY OR,

C. PLACE A STUDENT IN A SPECIAL PROGRAM

PL 94-142 and PLACEMENT

THE LAW REQUIRES THAT IF SCHOOL OFFICIALS THINK A STUDENT NEEDS TO BE EVALUATED OR PLACED IN A DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, THEY MUST FIRST NOTIFY THE PARENTS AND EXPLAIN:

1. WHAT ACTIONS ARE PROPOSED
2. WHY AN EVALUATION IS NECESSARY
3. WHAT OPTIONS HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED
4. ANY OTHER REASONS FOR RECOMMENDING A CHANGE IN PLACEMENT OR PROGRAM.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

1. CULTURE-FAIR TESTS PRIMARILY INVOLVE NONVERBAL TASKS THAT DO NOT HAVE STRICT TIME LIMITS. ITEMS FOR CULTURE-FAIR TESTS ARE SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY SAMPLE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND EXPERIENCE WHICH ARE EQUALLY COMMON OR UNCOMMON TO ALL GROUPS.

2. CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTING INTERPRETS ACHIEVEMENT BY DESCRIBING IN BEHAVIORAL TERMS THE STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE REGARDING A PARTICULAR INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE. THE STANDARD OR CRITERION IS USUALLY PREDETERMINED AND IT PROVIDES A STANDARD AGAINST WHICH TO COMPARE THE STUDENT'S ACHIEVEMENT. ABILITY TO TIE ONE'S SHOES, TO EAT UNASSISTED, TO BATHE, TO COUNT CHANGE, AND TO NAME COMMON HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS REPRESENTS BEHAVIOR THAT IS GENERALLY ASSESSED BY CRITERION-REFERENCED MEASURES.

3. ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR SCALES ATTEMPT TO MEASURE THE ABILITY OF AN INDIVIDUAL TO COPE WITH NATURAL AND SOCIAL DEMANDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT.